United States Military Entrance Processing Command
Operations Officer's Toolkit

MEPS
ASVAB
MIRS
Recruiting
Personnel

Medical
Testing
Processing
Operations
Training
Information
Technology
etc...

USMEPCOM OPERATIONS

A quick reference guide to get you through the first ninety days and beyond

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Introduction

The purpose of the USMEPCOM Operations Officer Toolkit is to provide general information to Operations Officers (OPSOs) concerning their duties and the "day-to-day" operations at the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS).

Often, newly-assigned OPSOs have little knowledge of the diversified mission or of their responsibilities at a MEPS upon arrival. Consequently, transitioning, understanding, and adapting to the unique, joint mission of the MEPS can be rather time-consuming and somewhat difficult. Therefore, at the recommendation of OPSOs nationwide, the USMEPCOM Operations Officer Toolkit and its input was derived from the knowledge and experiences of the OPSOs and Assistant Operations Officers at 65 MEPS. An important change in this toolkit is the guide to your references. Each policy or major issue discussed, will have the regulatory source information stated in italics for your use to locate the policy's in their entirety more easily. If the regulatory information is available online, click on the reference and a hyperlink will take you directly to the source.

The toolkit directly applies to all Operations Officers at MEPS' nationwide. However, Operations Officers at the Sector and Headquarters-level and Assistant Operations Officers at the MEPS-level may find these notes useful in the performance of their daily tasks.

This toolkit is not an official USMEPCOM regulation and it should not be used or referred to as such. It only serves as information to help OPSOs understand and accomplish the MEPS mission.

Chapter 1 - What is USMEPCOM?

The United States Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) is a joint Service Department of Defense (DoD) command that processes individuals for enlistment into the active, National Guard and Reserve Armed Components. The command's 65 Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS), determine qualifications for enlistment based on standards set by each branch of the Service, DoD, and federal law.

USMEPCOM is an integral part of the "Accession Triad" during peacetime operations. This triad is comprised of three components: recruiting Services, USMEPCOM, and the reception centers for each Service. The primary mission of the recruiting Services is to find eligible and qualified applicants who wish to join the United States Armed Forces. To ensure the eligibility and qualification of each applicant, the recruiting Services must present the applicant to USMEPCOM for "certification". USMEPCOM, through the MEPS, ensure the applicant is qualified based on unbiased application of standards set by each Service. When determined to be fully qualified, the MEPS then enlists the applicant and transports them to their respective reception centers for basic training and further processing for incorporation into the Service's general population.

Two primary strategic principles guide USMEPCOM in its mission accomplishment. These principles are the foundation on which USMEPCOM operates on a daily basis and can be found in the most current strategic plan *(Reference: USMEPCOM Strategic Plan dated December 2001):*

USMEPCOM Mission
- Ensure the quality of military accessions during peacetime and mobilization in accordance with established standards.

USMEPCOM Vision
- USMEPCOM is a first-class customer-centered, future-focused learning
organization, driven by best business practices and web-centric technology, providing 21st Century entrance processing and qualification, anytime - anywhere.

USMEPCOM accomplishes its mission by administering an aptitude test, medical examination, background screening/interview, and Oath of Enlistment for each applicant.

1. Aptitude Testing: (*Reference - USMEPCOM Reg 611-1)*
The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is the primary aptitude test used by USMEPCOM to ensure Service standards are met so that only qualified applicants enter basic training. There are two ASVAB testing programs:

     a. Student/High School Testing Program (STP): *(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-4)*
During each school year, USMEPCOM administers the student ASVAB to nearly one million students (10th through 12th grade) in over 14,000 high schools and post-secondary schools across the nation. The results of these tests are used by the school as part of the Career Exploration Program (CEP) developed by DoD. The test results for juniors, seniors, and post-secondary students are also normally valid for enlistment purposes by the Services.

     b. Enlistment Testing Program (ETP) - The enlistment ASVAB determines an applicant's qualifications for military occupations. Each year, USMEPCOM administers nearly 500,000 enlistment ASVABs at more than 650 test sites.

2. Medical Examinations: (*Reference - USMEPCOM Reg 40-1)*
The medical examination is normally the second stage of applicant processing. USMEPCOM ensures thorough medical examinations are performed by each MEPS in order to ensure applicants are in good

health. Each MEPS performs a variety of medical processes; complete medical examinations, inspections, consultations, etc., in order to medically qualify applicants for enlistment.

3. Background Screening/Interview: *(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 7)*
After the applicant has met and selected a military occupation with his/her Service counselor/liaison, he/she will undergo a background screening/interview (Pre-enlistment Interview or Pre-accession Interview (PEI/PAI)). Applicants must disclose all information that affects their enlistment. USMEPCOM verifies this information through fingerprinting and initiation of entrance national agency checks/national agency checks (ENTNAC/NAC). The purpose of the background screening process is to prevent applicants from fraudulently enlisting into the Armed Forces. The technical check (TECH Checks) and/or results of these background checks are forwarded to the Service each applicant is processing for via the MEPS.

4. Oath of Enlistment: (*Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 6)*
After applicants have met Service standards, received a military occupation through their Service counselor/liaison, and understand their enlistment agreement, a military officer will administer the Oath of Enlistment to each applicant. This action officially enlists them into the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), National Guard, and Reserves. Applicants are also accessed on to active duty for the regular component.

Chapter 2 - What is a MEPS?

MEPS Overview

The primary mission of the MEPS is to assist the Armed Forces in determining applicants' aptitude, medical and moral qualifications and process qualified applicants for enlistment. The MEPS performs the following functions to complete this mission:

    1. Coordinate and/or conduct off-site enlistment qualification testing at Mobile Examining Team (MET) sites.

    2. Conduct ASVAB and CAT-ASVAB (Computerized Adaptive Test) IAW DoD and USMEPCOM regulations.

    3.   Provide lodging, meals, and local transportation for applicants and enlistees while processing at the MEPS.

    4.   Prepare and conduct quality review of all enlistment documents for each applicant.

    5. Conduct medical examinations IAW USMEPCOM directives.

    6. Interview applicants for the purpose of preventing fraudulent entry into the Armed Forces.

    7. Fingerprint applicants.

    8. Prepare travel orders and arrangements for all enlistees to initial assignments.

    9. Enlist applicants accepted for enlistment by the Services.

    10. Electronically report all data entries and enlistments to HQ via MEPCOM Integrated Resource System (MIRS).

Mission Days/Saturday Openings

Mission Days: *(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 3)*
Each Service has one day at the end of the month that allows its command to push to make its mission goal for the month. On Mission Day, recruiters are under the gun to process applicants and reach their quota for the month. Consequently, you can definitely expect Service liaisons to process many of their applicants as Same Day Processors (SDPs - applicants who take the ASVAB, undergo a medical exam, and process into the DEP or are accessed into the Reserves or National Guard on the same day). Expect the Services to request many exceptions to process applicants beyond the scope of your standard processing policies (these are referred to as Exceptions to Policy which will be addressed later in the toolkit. On this day, the MEPS provide maximum support to the recruiting Services to finish processing all applicants brought into the MEPS. Often, this means staying open late hours to help the Services accomplish their mission. It's not unusual for a MEPS to stay open until midnight in order to finish processing all applicants for the particular Service that is processing on their Mission Day. The Army's mission day normally falls on the last Monday of the month. The other Services' mission day is usually the last day of the month. Only if prior arrangements have been made between USMEPCOM and the Joint Accession Group will these days be altered.

Extended-Hours Processing: *(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 3)*
Extended-hours processing support is a service offered by USMEPCOM. If Mission Day falls on any day

preceding a Federal Holiday, extended-hours processing will typically fall the day before the preceding day (i.e.: Thanksgiving. Mission day falls on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. USMEPCOM staff and Service Liaisons/Recruiters do not want to stay late that day, therefore extended-hours processing is enforced on Tuesday (2 days before Thanksgiving).

Saturday Operations: *(Reference – Memorandum dated 18 Jul 02, Subject: USMEPCOM Saturday Openings, signed by Charles S. Abell)*
Effective 1 October 2002, USMEPCOM will conduct applicant processing on nine Saturdays annually. One additional opening for each MEPS (10 total) will be authorized by the local MEPS Commander upon a request by an O-6 level Recruiting Commander that the operation is required for that command to meet its monthly mission objective, provided the MEPS Commander has a two-weeks notice of the Saturday opening requirement. Saturday processing allows the recruiting Services to bring in applicants who normally cannot process during the "work" week (Monday through Friday). Saturday processing days should be regarded as a full processing day; however, the MEPS do not ship applicants to basic training on Saturdays.

Red Carpet Program
(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 11)

The impression your MEPS creates will be long-lasting in the minds of the men and women who seek to join our Armed Forces. This first impression will ultimately influence the decision an applicant will make regarding enlistment. While there is stress from processing 120 vice 20 applicants in a day, the focus must be on the importance of personal contact with the applicants. The larger the applicant flow, the more important the personal focus becomes.

Many young applicants arriving at your MEPS are away from their homes for the first time. Most of these young men and women are contemplating the first major decision in their lives. Because of their age and inexperience, these applicants bring with them many doubts and insecurities common to teenagers and young adults. They may be anxious, nervous, and apprehensive. Professional and courteous treatment from the MEPS staff can help reduce many of these emotions. This chapter provides the policy for creating a quality-focused environment.

The Red Carpet program focuses on eight areas:

1. **Overview and the commander's role** in creating a quality, Service-oriented environment.

2. **Treatment of applicants** (minimum essential requirements) – Treat applicants/enlistees as individuals
and address them in a polite and respectful tone. Just as importantly as verbal communications, the MEPS staff must also be aware of their nonverbal communications. Explain each processing step to the applicants.;

3. **Activities available during waiting time** – Although the MEPS work as efficiently as possible, applicants/enlistees may experience some dead time. Provide some activities for applicants/enlistees such as maintaining a video game room and magazines.

4. **Applicant orientation, welcome, enlistment, departure procedures, and ceremonies briefings –** Most applicants are contemplating a major job or career decision which tends to make them extremely nervous. Conducting orientations gives you a chance to put them at ease by informing them of the procedures they will be going through to enlist while in your MEPS.

5. **Handling visitors** – Greet visitors warmly and determine if they are at the MEPS to see an applicant swear in or to visit a staff member. If possible, designate a space for a visitor's lounge. Further information on this policy is located in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Appendix D.*

6. **Assessment/feedback on Red Carpet Treatment** - Feedback from applicants will help you in evaluating the success of your program. An excellent feedback tool is the survey titled "How Do We Rate." This sample survey can be found in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Appendix D.*

7. **Handling of an uncooperative/disruptive applicant** – Generally, you should not experience any problems with applicants or enlistees. However, at some point in your tour at the MEPS, you may face the problem of dealing with an uncooperative, disgruntled or disruptive applicant/enlistee. In this situation, the applicant/enlistee must be removed from the processing area and counseled immediately. If the applicant/enlistee continues to display unacceptable behavior after you, the MEPS staff, and/or Service liaison have counseled them, take the following steps:

- Applicants: terminate processing, place the applicant in an administrative hold ("N") status in MIRS and complete and file a memorandum for record detailing the incident in his/her file *(USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Appendix L).*
- Enlistees: Return to Service for action.

Further guidance concerning handling problem applicants can be found in various regulations, i.e., in the lodging facility portion of *AR 601-270,* or in the MEPS medical section portion of *USMEPCOM Reg 40-1.*

8. **Customer relations checklists** can be found in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Appendix D.* These checklists will give you an outline of events for general conduct of Officers, NCOICs, and Civilians during the Morning Welcome Brief, internal operations, Testing, Processing, Medical, Background Screening, and Preenlistment/Preaccesion Briefing and Ceremony and Transportation briefings.

Chapter 3 - Operations Officer Duties and Responsibilities

As the Operations Officer, your responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring end of day communication is performed.

2. Ensuring the processing staff is properly trained.

3. Reviewing and updating, as necessary, processing policies and procedures.

4. Reviewing the daily morning and evening reconciliation on a periodic basis.

5. Comparing the DEP Roster to the USMEPCOM Form 727-E (Processing List) on a periodic basis.

6. Maintaining a good working relationship with recruiting Service liaisons and Operations Officers to ensure efficient processing for applicants.

Your duties include:

Commander's Brief
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Appendix D)

The Commander's Brief is an extremely important aspect to the beginning of the processing day. For most applicants, this is the first time they have seen a military officer. This brief also sets the tone and tempo for the processing day. It is important to be friendly, professional, expeditious and informative. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions.

The Commander's Brief may be done before or after applicants check in with the Service liaisons. Also, some MEPS separate the Commander's Brief from a Welcome Brief, creating two different morning briefs, while others combine the two. Do what works best for your processing flow. Listed below are items that should be included in the Commander's Brief

1. No weapons of any type are allowed inside the building.

2. No smoking or other tobacco products will be used in the MEPS (if applicable mention it is illegal for individuals under the age of 18 to possess any type of tobacco product).

3. Do not leave personal valuables in baggage; turn valuables into Service liaisons for safekeeping.

4. Address policy of wearing jewelry (i.e., earrings, studs, etc.) by both male and female applicants.

5. Address the applicant dress code for your MEPS.

6. No headphones, beepers, or cellular phones will be used in the MEPS at any time.

7. No feet on the furniture.

8. Mention location of emergency exits, restrooms, pay phones, dining room, etc.

9. Address parking issues (if applicable).

10. Outline of schedule for applicants (non-SDP and SDP versions) including medical processing, job selection, and enlistment processing.

11. Inform applicants that family and friends can be invited to the enlistment ceremony.

12. Discuss UCMJ Article 83 (Fraudulent Enlistment).

13. Inform applicants to address any questions throughout the processing day to the Control Desk. Also tell applicants they can, and should, address questions concerning their enlistment to their Service liaisons.

14. The Commander's Brief can be given by any officer or the MEPS Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA)/First Sergeant.

Oath of Enlistment Ceremonies
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap 5)
(Reference: AR 601-270)

The Oath of Enlistment is the most important aspect of the processing cycle. For applicants, it is the culmination of a great deal of processing time and waiting in anticipation of the day they will enter the military to begin their careers. It is also symbolic of a special commitment applicants are making to the Nation. Therefore, you must ensure the Oath of Enlistment is an auspicious and dignified ceremony. By the very nature of the ceremony, applicants should feel a sense of pride and achievement in their decision to enter the U.S. Armed Forces, whether entering the DEP or shipping to basic training. The minimum standards for enlistment ceremonies are listed below:

1. Conduct ceremonies in the Service dress uniform versus utility/work uniform (i.e. Battle Dress Uniforms).

2. Only use ceremonial rooms for the administration of the Oath of Enlistment and other significant events such as changes of command and presentation of awards. Ensure all items in the room present a dignified atmosphere, the flag and Service seal sequence are correct, and the podium in the ceremony room has a fixed DoD seal.

3. Ensure any non-MEPS officer conducting a ceremony is briefed to standard. Provide them with suggestions for comments and personalization of the ceremony.

4. Administer the Oath of Enlistment in the English language only.

5. Ask applicants prior to the Oath of Enlistment, *"Have you been briefed on and do you understand DoDs separation policy and restrictions on personal conduct in the Armed Forces?"*

The sequence of events for the Oath of Enlistment ceremony are:

1. <u>Pre-enlistment briefing, UCMJ and ceremony procedures</u> - Most MEPS have the enlisted personnel accomplish this, using a binder with step-by-step instructions. When you first arrive, you will need to review this binder and sit through several of these briefs.

2. <u>Pre-Oath of Enlistment greeting</u> - You or the enlisting officer should welcome applicants and greet any visitors, thanking them for attending this special occasion. Emphasize the importance and significance of the ceremony, honor of serving our country, and the commitment the applicants are about to make to put country before self. Convey that it is your pleasure and honor to give the oath. There is a proposed script in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap 6, section 5* but many MEPS create and adapt this to meet their needs. It is very important you memorize whatever greeting you decide to use so you are not reading it each time.

3. Oath of Enlistment - The Oath of Enlistment is a significant event applicants and their family members always remember. Ensure a solemn, dignified presentation of the oath. Make eye contact with each applicant as you recite the oath.

4. Post enlistment comments/activities - Additional comments such as congratulations are appropriate after the oath. Also, some MEPS gesture hand shaking of applicants/enlistees, and/or visitor at this time. It is prohibited to photograph or film other applicants/enlistees without their permission. If visitors have cameras, allow visitors to take photographs after the ceremony. You can reenact the ceremony by raising right hands in front of the flags. You can then take "grip and grin" photos and take photos of the applicants with their family and friends.   If time permits, you can conduct private ceremonies at the request of a visitor.

5. Enlistment contract signing - Contract signing will be performed in another room from the Ceremony Room.   Ensure the room is appropriately decorated. Arrange for applicants/enlistees to have individual desks and a desk or podium at the front of the room for you or the enlisting officer. Ensure the applicant/enlistee knows where to sign their contracts. If time permits, take the time to ask the applicant(s)/enlistees personal questions such as what job they received and when they are shipping out. Congratulate each applicant/enlistee and shake his or her hand at this time if you haven't done so after the ceremony.

While each MEPS must ensure they incorporate the minimum standards, set forth in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23* and are subject to inspection by Inspector General (IG) team visits, every MEPS will most likely have their own unique style of conducting the ceremony. After you are on board awhile, contact other OPSOs and see how they conduct their ceremonies. Also review previous IG findings published by Sector headquarters and HQ USMEPCOM. These documents will let you know if you are missing anything from your ceremony.

Acting Commander

There will be several occasions when you will assume command of your MEPS in the absence of your commander. Use the following information to assist you during these times.

1. Ensure an "Assumption of Command" memorandum is on file.

2. Be well versed on any outstanding IRC issues.

3. Be aware of any upcoming VIP visitors.

4. Identify any taskers due in your commander's absence. Be knowledgeable of recurring taskers and any new suspense's such as MIRS Command software updates and reviewing the daily USMEPCOM Form 40-8-6-R (HIV Control Log).

5. Review any policies with your commander that you are unsure of.

6. Create a list of applicable regulations that you may need as acting commander.

7. Be aware of any pending personnel, legal, or administrative issues (UCMJ actions, non-judicial actions, leaves, TDYs, etc.).

8. Maintain internal and external communication channels.
- Ensure recall roster is up-to-date
- Monitor your commander's e-mail
- Continue to conduct staff meetings
- Ensure you have Cluster Commander's name, phone number, and e-mail address

- Ensure you have IRC members' names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses
- Inform Service liaisons the period during which you will be acting commander
- Communicate with higher headquarters

9. Be aware and keep informed of key staff issues.
    a. <u>Medical/CMO issues</u>
      - Know the MEPS fee-based physicians' phone numbers and work schedules
      - Ensure physician credentialing is current
    b. <u>1SG issues</u>
      - Brief your expectations of him/her
      - Review any building maintenance issues
      - Review any meals and lodging issues
    c. <u>Budget issues</u> KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SIGNING! This may include outstanding purchase orders for signature, fee-based physician pay vouchers (FBP 702s), specialty medical consultation pay vouchers (consultation 702s), hotel meals and lodging pay vouchers (USMEPCOM Form 727-E copies 2 through 5 (Processing List)), TDY orders, etc.
    d. <u>Supply issues</u>
      - Review outstanding supply Purchase Orders (POs)
      - Review IMPAC (credit card) purchases and government vehicle maintenance logs
      - Keep abreast of incoming equipment and the turn-in of any old equipment
    e. <u>Student Testing issues</u>
      - Keep abreast of the ESSs schedule
      - Keep informed of any high school/student ASVAB and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issues

10. When your commander returns to duty, debrief him/her as to what occurred during their absence:
    a. Consider keeping a daily log or preparing a written brief.
    b. Inform him/her of any new taskers and outstanding issues; provide an update of completed taskers.
    c. Brief on any VIP visits that may have occurred during their absence
    d. Give him/her any reading material (e.g. e-mail messages, faxes, professional publications, etc.) that were received during their absence

11. The above guidance is, by no means, an all-inclusive list of things to know when you are tabbed to be the acting commander; however, it will assist you while you are in charge. Just remember...
    a. Implement Rule 13 - "When in Charge, Take Charge"
    b. Accomplish the mission
    c. Keep your MEPS running smoothly
      (1) Allow your personnel to use the commander's Open Door Policy
      (2) Monitor command climate and keep abreast of unit morale
      (3) Be responsive to the needs of your personnel; allow time off as mission permits
      (4) Carefully manage processing policy exception requests from recruit personnel.
      (5) Keep abreast of weekly personnel training
    d. Remember your customers are priority #1
      (1) Service personnel
      (2) Applicants
      (3) MEPS personnel
      (4) Higher headquarters
      (5) Visitors
      (6) Vendors/contractors
    e. Relieve stress -- Do PT!

Applicant Travel/Contracting Officer Representative (COR)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 55-2)

As the OPSO, you will assume duties as the MEPS Acting Transportation Officer (ATO) and will be responsible for applicant/enlistee travel. As the ATO, take the time to become intimately familiar with travel regulations and the process of procuring, verifying and approving payment for transportation (bus, meal, and airline tickets). Coordinating travel arrangements for applicants departing to their basic training sites is a very arduous, tedious duty. For this reason, normally one person in the Processing Section assumes duties as the Transportation Specialist (TS) and performs transportation duties full-time. Because of the complex, highly sensitive nature of this position, the TS billet should not be taken lightly; therefore, it is very important you and your Processing NCOIC pick a competent, motivated person to operate in this section. To ensure proper training of your TS, USMEPCOM Operations – Liaison Division (MOP-LA) produces a CD title Transportation Specialist Training Course, Introduction to the Transportation Specialist Position. Ensure that your MEPS has this CD and that your Travel NCO has completed the training module. If you can not locate your copy of the CD, request for the CD can be requested through MOP-LA.

The Travel Section is responsible for arranging travel for all enlistees traveling to their reception centers. The TS is responsible for the security of numerous accountable forms and tickets in addition to maintaining audit trails, logs, and receipt of enlistee signatures for all accountable forms and tickets. He/she is also responsible for giving a daily travel briefing and conducting periodic inventories and maintaining stock levels of all accountable forms and tickets pertaining to the Travel Section. Knowledge of unique requirements of each military Service regulation concerning the ordering, preparation, distribution, and payment procedures for Standard Form 1169 (U.S. Government Transportation Request (GTRs)), meal tickets, bulk ticket purchases, and appropriate fiscal data is required.

Government Travel Service (GTS):
This refers to bus or airline reservations and ticketing provided by government-approved travel agencies for enlistees traveling to training sites. Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) Agency serves as the authorized airline travel agency for most MEPS. Operations Officers usually serve as the Contracting Officer Representative (COR) for GTS contracts. You will need to work closely with the designated MEPS Travel NCO/Clerk to ensure the Centrally Billed Accounts (CBAs) for each Service is paid on time. Each Service branch has a separate credit accounts used to pay for their enlistee travel arrangements.

Each month, you should review the bill received for each Service branch with the Travel Clerk to ensure paperwork is submitted to the appropriate finance center for payment. One of the biggest problems with the bill is CWT applying charges to the wrong Service branch account. Have the Travel NCO/Clerk watch closely for this. If USMEPCOM conducts a Travel NCO conference, ensure you send your Travel NCO/Clerk. Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) conducts periodic GTS "live bill" training -- if at all possible, you and your Travel NCO/Clerk should try to attend.

Upon arrival as the OPSO, you must to ensure the former COR has requested termination from COR duties and requested temporary designation for you as new COR. Contract Officer Representative online training courses (for Army travel contracts)can be located at www.faionline.com or www.gsa.gov/fai .

At first glance, applicant travel responsibilities may seem simple, but your opinion changes quickly when you're called at 2300 hrs because an enlistee is stuck at the airport, and you have to figure out what you're going to do with him/her. Moreover, your MEPS Operations rating during an IG inspection depends considerably on the success of your travel operations.

Amusement Vending Machine Fund (AVMF)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 215-1)

The AVMF is a Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF), managed by USMEPCOM assigned personnel, and used for

the collective benefit of all USMEPCOM personnel – no appropriated funds will be used. AVMF is financed by commissions paid by contracted concessionaire from amusement and vending machines within the MEPS, travel rebates, bank interest, and HQ USMEPCOM fund redistribution from other MEPS (if applicable).

People who may benefit (otherwise referred to as beneficiaries) from the AVMF include assigned or attached USMEPCOM military and civilian personnel and their immediate family members. Non-beneficiary guests may be invited to AVMF activities (referred to as "friends of the MEPS" and normally include Service liaison personnel and their family members). AVMF can only be used for the benefit of all MEPS personnel, not for any one individual.

If you are appointed as the AVMF Manager, you must become intimately familiar with this regulation and follow it "to the letter". Whenever you are in doubt of the regulation, immediately contact the AVMF POC at your HQ Sector.

Each MEPS AVMF managing authority is set up as follows:

1.   AVMF Manager: Appointed by the MEPS Commander and must be an officer or E-7/GS-7 or above. Generally the Operations Officer or the Assistant Operations Officer serves in this capacity. Performs a *quarterly* review of AVMF transactions and forwards data to HQ USMEPCOM. Responsible for conducting a *semi-annual* inventory of all AVMF property (property may be purchased if it is not attainable through appropriated funds, and if it benefits the majority of the MEPS personnel, e.g. barbecue grill, recreational equipment, etc.).

2.   Assistant AVMF Manager: Appointed by the MEPS commander and must be an E-5/GS-5 or above.

3.   AVMF Council: Consists of the Commander, Support Group Supervisor (SGS), and one other disinterested individual capable of having AVMF check signing authority.

4.   AVMF Committee: Consists of at least five voting member (must have at least one civilian and one military representative on the committee) and the nonvoting AVMF manager.

5.   AVMF Committee President: May be an officer, civilian (GS-5 or above), or enlisted (E-5 or above) assigned to the MEPS

6.   AVMF Warranted Contracting Officer (WCO): Must be an e-6 or above (military only – no civilian) and is nominated and passes the AVMF WCOs correspondence course at least 30 days prior to the requesting termination of the current WCO.

7.   Ordering Officers: E-5/GS-5 and above

AVMF forms/software used:

1.   DA Form 2107 (NAF Receipt and Disbursement Voucher): Used for all AVMF transactions, deposits, and withdrawals.

2.   DA Form 4083-R (Vending or Amusement Machine Collections): Used for concessionaire commissions (joint coin count).

3.   Microsoft Money (MS Money): Software program used to record AVMF transactions and maintain the AVMF account

All expenses and expenditures, authorized or incurred, must be documented in the "minutes" of each AVMF meeting. Some examples of AVMF authorized expenditures are:

1. Cash awards: $100 or less for individuals for competitive events (e.g., MEPS Military Member of the Quarter).

2. Team events: $200 or less for team events; a team must have at least three members of MEPS personnel.

3. Administrative expenses:
    - Food purchases to recognize/celebrate birthdays of the Service branches
    - Property, equipment
    - Fund re-distributions to other MEPS
    - Hails and Farewells

Chapter 4 - Enlistment Processing

Applicant Processing Overview
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 601-23)
(Reference: AR 601-270)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 680-1/3)

The daily applicant processing schedule dictates the flow path the applicant will follow from the time he/she checks-in at the Control Desk until the time when they take the Oath of Enlistment. Although the daily processing schedule is essentially the same for all MEPS, it varies from MEPS to MEPS depending on a myriad of factors (e.g., size of MEPS, time zone in which the MEPS is located, number of MEPS personnel, flight availability, etc.). There are five basic steps to the applicant processing schedule:

     1. MEPS Morning Check-in (i.e., MEPS Control Desk, Medical Control Desk, etc., depending upon MEPS flow)

     2. Medical Processing

     3. Service Processing

     4. Enlistment Processing: Pre-enlistment Interview (PEI), Background Screening, and the Pre-Accessions Interview (PAI)

     5. Oath of Enlistment Ceremony

     6. MEPS final check-out

MEPS Morning Check-in:
 The day prior to the applicants arriving to the MEPS, Service liaisons schedule (project) their applicants for processing using the MEPCOM Integrated Resource System (MIRS). After the projections have been completed, the MEPS generates the USMEPCOM Form 727-E which contains the names of the applicants processing for the next day. Upon arrival at the MEPS, the applicant will check-in with the Services and then at the MEPS Control Desk (depending on your MEPS, the applicant may check-in/out at the MEPS Control Desk first). Control desk personnel will check the applicant's name off on the USMEPCOM Form 727-E, track him/her on MIRS, and if applicable provide him/her a MIRS-generated nametag for identification purposes (at some MEPS the Service counselor/liaison pass out the name tags). Afterwards, the applicant will be seated in the designated area for the Commander's and/or Welcome Brief. After the briefs, the applicant will normally proceed to the Medical Section to begin their medical processing.

Medical Processing:
Medical personnel will escort the applicants to the Medical Briefing Room (if other than Commander's Welcome Brief designated area), in order to receive the medical briefing and complete the appropriate medical processing forms and if applicable, check-in. After they have competed all of the necessary paperwork for their medical processing, applicants will begin their physical examinations. Once the applicant completes his/her physical, the medical personnel will annotate this fact on USMEPCOM Form 727-E, check the applicant out of the Medical Section, and send him/her to the MEPS Control Desk. MEPS Control Desk personnel will track the applicant and send him/her to the respective Service.

Service Processing:
At this stage, the applicant works with his/her Service counselor/liaison to select a "job" in the military. Depending on the needs and wants of the Service and the applicant, this can take minutes or hours to complete. Once the applicant has selected a job, the Service counselor will complete their Service and USMEPCOM required paperwork and forward the applicant, with their enlistment packet, to the MEPS

Control Desk to initiate the final enlistment processing.

Enlistment Processing (Pre-Enlistment Interview): *(Reference – USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap 5)*
During the PEI, the MEPS Human Resource Assistant (HRA) interviews the applicant, "one-on-one" and in private. The HRA will ask the applicant questions concerning possible law violations, drug and alcohol abuse, and other issues that may affect his/her entry into the Armed Forces. Also, the HRA briefs the applicant on the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) Fraudulent Enlistment Policy, USMEPCOM Form 601-23-4-E (Restrictions on Personal Conduct in the Armed Forces) prior to, or during, the PEI. During the PEI, if the applicant has an additional disclosure, it must be resolved before further processing continues. Once the PEI is completed, and the enlistment data has been entered in MIRS, the HRA prepares and fingerprint the applicant's enlistment contract for him/her to review and sign with his/her Service counselor. After the applicant and his/her Service counselor sign the contract, the applicant returns with the contract to the MEPS Control Desk for the Oath of Enlistment Ceremony.

Pre-Accession Interview (PAI): *(Reference - USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap 5)*
The PAI is another quality check to conduct before enlistment in a Regular component from DEP. The PAI does not apply to Reserve and National Guard enlistees returning to MEPS for shipping. The PAI is similar to the PEI but gives the MEPS commander the option of conducting the PAI individually or in a group setting. During the PAI, the HRA will ask the applicant questions pertaining to incidents or injuries since entering the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) . At the end of the PAI, the applicant will sign and date USMEPCOM Form 601-23-5-R-E (Introductory Preaccession Interview) and give it the interviewer for disposition. Applicants refusing to sign the form will not be allowed further processing until the issue is resolved with the appropriate recruiting Service.

Oath of Enlistment Ceremony

Pre-Oath Briefing/Enlistment Ceremony: *(Reference - USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap 5)*
At designated times throughout the processing day, a designated Ceremony NCO will take applicants with completed contracts to the MEPS Ceremony Room for a Pre-Oath Briefing prior to the Oath of Enlistment Ceremony. The Ceremony NCO will brief applicants on where and when to sign his/her enlistment contract, UCMJ Articles 83, 85, and 86 and inform them on how to stand at "Attention."

Once the applicant has been properly prepared for the ceremony, the enlistment officer will be notified to report to the Ceremony Room to conduct the Oath of Enlistment. Prior to administering the Oath of Enlistment, the enlistment officer must ask if the applicant has received and understood the brief on the UCMJ Fraudulent Enlistment Policy, the DoD Separation Policy and USMEPCOM Form 601-23-4-E Restrictions on Personal Conduct In the Armed Forces). Once the enlistment officer has determined that the applicant is ready to "swear-in", they will proceed to administer the Oath of Enlistment and sign, with the applicant, in the appropriate blocks of the enlistment contract (contract signing will be performed in a room other than the Ceremony Room). This signifies the applicant's entry into the DEP, reserves, National Guard, or entry into active duty.

If the applicant has family, friends, or their recruiter present at the ceremony, you will want to allow the guests to take pictures. If any applicant objects to having their picture taken in the presence of the other applicants participating in the ceremony, you can perform a mock ceremony at a later time.

Once the Oath of Enlistment ceremony is completed, applicants processing for transport to basic training, etc. will continue processing for that mission. Applicants who are only enlisting into the DEP, reserves or National Guard are done with their processing at the MEPS for the day. The MEPS control desk will check-out the applicant to his/her Service who will check-out the applicant for the day using MIRS.

Regular Component Delayed Entry Program (DEP) Process

The DEP refers to any of the various Service programs to enlist personnel into a special inactive Reserve group pending enlistment into active Service at a projected future date. A DEP enlistee is not an accession. The majority of applicants who come to the MEPS will be 'DEPper's'.

Reserve/National Guard Accession Process

Accessions pertain to applicants who are entering the active component or enter in the Reserves or the Army/Air National Guard. The processing flow for these applicants is the same for those entering the DEP. The only difference is that the applicants actually become members of the Reserves or National Guard once they take the Oath of Enlistment and complete enlistment paperwork respective to the Reserves or National Guard during the PEI. Reserve applicants take the same Oath of Enlistment as DEP applicants; however, National Guard applicants receive a modified oath because they pledge allegiance both to the Nation and the state in which they are entering the National Guard.

Regular Ship Process

Applicants who entered into the regular component DEP will return to the MEPS when they are ordered to ship out to basic training; they will first be discharged from the DEP and then accessed onto active duty. Applicants who entered into the Reserves or National Guard will return to the MEPS to ship out to basic training. When applicants (also known as "shippers") return to the MEPS, they undergo similar processing as they underwent upon their initial arrival at the MEPS. With the following differences:

     1. Shippers do not receive another complete physical examination; instead, they receive an "inspect" examination in which medical personnel update their medical records with any new information that may have an impact upon their entering onto active duty and/or completing basic training. If shipping within 72 hours of the physical examination or inspect, the applicant does not require an inspection.

     2. Shippers meet with their respective Service counselor only to update their official records to ensure all the documents they need for training are complete and accurate.

     3. Regular component shippers receive the Pre-accession Interview (PAI), (similar to the PEI previously conducted prior to DEP). Normally conducted in a group setting, vice a one-on-one setting, the PAI is normally administered by the MEPS Travel Clerk or a HRA. The PAI is performed in order to review the shippers' records and to inquire about possible law violations and drug/alcohol abuse while they were in the DEP.

     4. After the initial travel brief and PAI, shippers will visit with a HRA to generate a DD Form 4/1 ("accession contract") and complete paperwork necessary to bring them onto active duty. This does not pertain to Reserve or National Guard shippers - they have already accessed into and are members of the Reserves or National Guard. Shippers will review their contract with their Service counselor and return with it to the MEPS Control Desk for the Enlistment Ceremony.

     5. Shippers will again participate in the Oath of Enlistment Ceremony with the exception of Reserve or National Guard shippers. The significance of the second ceremony is to signify the applicants' entrance onto active duty.

     6. After all shippers traveling in the same travel group have sworn in or finished processing, the Travel Clerk will conduct the final travel briefing in which shippers are given their travel itinerary (airline, meal, and/or bus tickets) and final travel instructions. After the final travel brief, the Travel Clerk arranges for transportation to pick-up and take the shippers to the airport or bus station for travel to their basic training site.

Same Day Processor (SDP) Processing

SDPs are applicants who intend to test, physical, and enlist in the DEP, Reserves, or National Guard in one day. SDP applicants will take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) before receiving a medical physical and PEI (normally, applicants have taken the ASVAB before arriving at the MEPS). Once SDP applicants finish the ASVAB and have met the minimum qualifying test score for the Service they are processing for, they will go on to receive the physical examination and complete enlistment processing.

Chapter 5 - Testing Section

General Overview
(Reference: AR 601-222)

The MEPS Testing Section is normally the first section any applicant, processing through the MEPS, is exposed to. This section determines the intellectual qualifications of the applicant for entry into the United States Armed Forces – through the administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This section is also responsible for the administration of Special Purpose Tests often required by the Services for an applicant's entry into specialized fields within the Service they are processing for.

The Testing Section is also responsible for the administration and marketing of the DoD Student Testing Program (STP). This program is administered in high schools and post-secondary institutions across the nation. The program assists both the students and the recruiting Services. Students receive invaluable career exploration information through the results of the exam. Once the MEPS Testing Section processes the exam session, the recruiting Services, depending upon the wishes of the school, receive pre-qualified recruiting leads.

Enlistment Testing Program (ETP)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 611-1)

The ETP involves the administration of the ASVAB to applicants seeking to enlist in the United States Armed Forces. Each Service has a minimum score every applicant must achieve in order to be eligible for enlistment. The results from the ASVAB are additionally used to determine an applicant's eligibility for jobs within their Services. Applicants scoring high on the ASVAB will normally be offered more technically oriented jobs within the Service they are processing for. Applicants scoring low on the ASVAB will not be eligible for more advanced jobs. NOTE: Job classification for applicants is solely the responsibility of the Services.

The ASVAB is administered through two methods. The first method uses a computer-based testing system to administer the exam. The second method uses more traditional means to administer the exam – paper and pencil. This method is normally used at remote testing sites (Mobile Examination Test (MET) Sites) and at the MEPS only as a back up in the event computer-based testing is not available.

Computerized Adaptive Testing - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (CAT-ASVAB):
CAT-ASVAB is a computer-based version of the traditional ASVAB. Using computer terminals located at the MEPS and limited MET Sites, applicants take the CAT-ASVAB at their own pace versus taking it in a time-paced setting. When the applicant completes a sub-test, they can immediately move to the next sub-test. However, the maximum amount of time the applicant may spend on a sub-test is the same as for the paper and pencil version. In addition, CAT-ASVAB tailors the questions posed to the applicant based on their abilities. As the applicant gets more questions correct, the system automatically increases the level of difficulty of the questions.

The CAT-ASVAB system offers several significant advantages over the paper and pencil version of the exam. The most significant advantage of the system is increased flexibility for the MEPS, applicants and recruiting Services. Instead of requiring 3 ½ hours to complete, the applicant has a maximum of three hours to complete the exam – it is completely self-paced. Most applicants are able to complete the exam in 1 ½ - 2 hours. This also allows the MEPS to continually test applicants – when a CAT-ASVAB terminal becomes available, another applicant can begin to test. This allows the MEPS to test more applicants in a given period of time than with the paper and pencil version.

The second advantage of the system is that the exam results are immediately available for enlistment

purposes. This enables the applicant to take the CAT-ASVAB, get a physical examination and enlist all in one visit to the MEPS, otherwise called a Same Day Processor (SDP).

Paper and Pencil ASVAB:
The traditional method for administering the ASVAB is by paper and pencil. This method requires approximately three and one half-hours to complete the exam. The exam is divided into nine sub-tests which tests the applicant's abilities in a variety of subjects ranging from mathematics to electronics and mechanical systems. Each sub-test is allotted a specific amount of time. If the applicant finishes early, they must wait until the end of the sub-test before they continue to the next sub-test. If requested by the recruiter, when the exam is finished, each applicant receives a set of unverified (unofficial) scores from the Test Administrator (TA), if requested. In order to be processed, the TA must send the exam answer sheets to the MEPS for scoring and entry into the MIRS database. The MEPS has 72 hours from the date of the exam session in order to provide results to the recruiting services.

Mobile Examining Team (MET) Sites: *(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 611-1, Chap 4, para 4-2(f))*
These testing sites have been established to administer the ASVAB to applicants located in outlying areas within the geographic responsibility of the MEPS. The MEPS Testing Section is responsible for the management of all MET sites located within their geographic region. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is normally contracted for test administration at these sites. In order to ensure proper test administration and that a proper testing environment exists at the MET site, the MEPS is required to conduct an inspection of each MET site and TA every 18 months.

The MEPS is also responsible for establishing a testing schedule that maximizes the use of each of their MET sites. To ensure optimal use of each site, the MEPS must coordinate with their local IRC to ensure the testing schedule meets their needs. MEPS Commanders have the authority through coordination with higher headquarters to open, close, or relocate MET sites should it be deemed necessary. They must also stress the importance and value of these sites to the recruiting Services and encourage them to use these facilities.

Exam Results and Retesting

Results from either the CAT-ASVAB or paper and pencil are normally valid for enlistment for two years after the test. The applicant may retake the ASVAB only after a specified amount of time has passed from their initial test. In most cases an applicant may retake the ASVAB one calendar month after the first time they take the ASVAB. They may take an additional re-test one month after their initial retest. Subsequent re-tests are authorized every six months after their second retest. For example, an applicant taking their first ASVAB on January 2nd may re-test on or after February 2nd. The applicant may take a second retest on or after March 2nd. The earliest the applicant can re-take the ASVAB after this second retest is September 2nd. Violation of the retest policy will normally result in the test being invalidated and the applicant barred from re-testing for six months.

Student Testing Program (STP)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 601-4)
(Reference: www.asvabprogram.com)

As previously mentioned, the Student Testing Program involves the administration of the ASVAB at high schools and post-secondary schools across the nation. Annually, over an estimated 14,000 schools test almost one million students using this program. Depending upon your MEPS, you may have from 200 to 1,000 schools your Education Services Specialist (ESS) regularly contacts to take the exam.

The STP offers schools a comprehensive tool for student career exploration. In addition to the ASVAB, the program has a detailed occupational guide and personality test. Used in conjunction with each other, the STP can give students new insight into fields that they may wish to explore further for their future careers, or crystallize career fields they have already decided upon.

Additionally, the STP can also provide the recruiting Services with valuable pre-qualified recruiting leads. This enables them to specifically target applicants that may be qualified for enlistment. However, only the schools may direct the release of STP results to the Services. Test results from the STP are valid for enlistment under most circumstances.

Education Services Specialist (ESS):
The ESS is responsible for the proper management and administration of the STP in their area. The ESS markets the STP to high schools and post-secondary schools located within the MEPS geographic area of responsibility. In addition, the ESS will administer and/or interpret the results of an exam session for the school's students if the school requests them to do so. The ESS is by nature a salesman, a marketer, and a politician rolled into one person.

Each school year the ESS is assigned Recruiter Lead (RL) goal. Typically this number is one percent more than their goal from the previous school year. A recruiter lead is a student whose test result is released to the recruiting Services and is valid for enlistment purposes. This is the MEPS Commander's only tangible mission goal.

Test Coordinator (TC):
The Test Coordinator works closely with the ESS and is responsible for the scheduling process for schools interested in participating in the STP. The TC coordinates with the schools, OPM, and the MEPS to ensure each test session is administered and the results are processed and returned to the schools in a timely manner. In addition, the TC typically coordinates with OPM for test administration at MET sites.

Special Tests
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 611-1)

Applicants take these tests, in addition to the ASVAB, to qualify for specific Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), military rates, or enlisted/officer programs. The majority of special tests are given at the MEPS, however, there are some job-specific tests that are given by the recruiting Services. Certain special tests require coordination with designated MEPS that are responsible for providing test resources for these exams. Most special tests are scored in-house, with results immediately available. However, some special tests, such as the Air Force Officer Qualification Test (AFOQT), must be sent to other processing centers; results may not be available for up to 8 weeks. Depending upon the special test, an applicant may retake the exam from one month to six months after they take the exam.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
(Reference: CE 611-1)

OPM is contracted by USMEPCOM to administer the enlistment ASVAB at MET sites and many student ASVABs at schools across the nation. OPM is responsible for the recruitment, hiring, and training of civilian TAs in support of the MEPS mission. Additionally, OPM must train and re-certify each of its TAs on an annual basis. Typically personnel from your Testing Section will be invited to attend the annual training session for the regional OPM Service Center.

Each MEPS Testing Section will deal with at least one OPM Service Center; many MEPS deal with multiple Service Centers. It is vital that your MEPS maintain a strong working relationship with OPM. The success of your STP and ETP depend on it.

Test Security

Test security is extremely important. For example, if a test booklet is lost or stolen, the version in question is

considered compromised and an investigation will be conducted.

The test security area is the room or rooms to which access has been limited to those persons designated by the Commander or, in limited situations, the Test Control Officer (TCO). This area will be off limits to all other personnel, including but not limited to applicants, recruiters, guidance counselors, and liaison personnel. The doors of these security areas will be kept locked when not occupied. Combination numbers and keys to test material containers will be available only to authorized personnel. All test material must be double locked when not in use.

Chapter 6 - Medical Section

General Overview
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 40-1)
(Reference: AR 40-501)

Medical processing is the one area of applicant processing where you as the OPSO, regardless of your best efforts, cannot become the subject matter expert in all aspects of examination procedures and decision-making processes. The professional medical knowledge and judgment of the MEPS Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has accumulated over long years of study and experience. This knowledge cannot be imparted, except in very general terms, to non-physicians. The medical standards, as promulgated by the recruiting services, are not exact and, in most cases, require the subjective medical judgment of the CMO. In short, it is important that you and the CMO forge a good, solid working relationship and communicate with each other frequently to ensure all applicants are medically qualified IAW medical standards for enlistment into the Armed Forces.

Other than in subjective medical matters, medical standards are definable, such as medical administrative procedures, medical supply and maintenance matters, medical personnel hiring and payment procedures, and similar matters. Of course, the final responsibility rests with the MEPS commander. The relationship between the MEPS Commander and the CMO is the same as in any other organization -- that of supervisor and subordinate. This chapter is concerned primarily with matters that fall into the administrative category rather than in the area of medical technical expertise.

Medical NCOIC

Working directly for you, the Medical NCOIC ensures the smooth processing flow in the Medical Section. The Medical NCOIC directs applicants where they need to go to undergo medical testing (e.g. height/weight, blood pressure, vision/hearing screening, orthopedic/neurological testing, Human Immunodeficiency Virus /Drug and Alcohol Test (HIV/DAT), CMO interview, etc.). They arrange specialty consultations and are responsible for correct data entry and reconciliation of applicant medical data in MIRS. They are also responsible for medical training and administrative matters for the health technicians employed in the section. The Medical NCOIC also serves as the liaison between the medical section and service liaisons pertaining to applicant medical issues.

Health Technicians

Working under the supervision of the Medical NCOIC, Health Technicians perform diagnostic medical screening of applicants (performing the applicant medical brief, height/weight testing, blood pressure testing, vision/hearing screening, assisting the CMO with orthopedic/neurological testing and female examinations, and HIV/DAT). You may have a Lead Health Technician who assists the Medical NCOIC in their duties and serves as the acting supervisor in the absence of the NCOIC. You may also have a Lab Technician (usually military) assigned in the section. Lab Technicians are responsible for all HIV/DAT testing and administration and other laboratory testing performed at the MEPS (i.e., HCG/pregnancy testing, etc.).

Chief Medical Officer (CMO)

The MEPS CMO has three functional areas of responsibility. The CMO's primary function is as the MEPS technical medical expert. The CMO is supervised in professional matters by the respective sector surgeon, who, in turn, receives professional guidance from the USMEPCOM surgeon and from the Surgeon Generals of the recruiting Services. The secondary function of the CMO is to work closely with the Medical NCOIC to manage the daily operations of the Medical Section. The CMO is directly subordinate to the MEPS commander in administrative matters. Thirdly, the CMO is responsible for the training of the Fee-Basis

commander in administrative matters. Thirdly, the CMO is responsible for the training of the Fee-Basis Physicians that work in the MEPS.

Due to the special nature of the education, training, and knowledge required to make a professional medical determination, the MEPS commander or other MEPS personnel cannot reverse the decisions of the CMO on subjective medical matters. Such decisions can be reversed only through the professional medical chain (i.e., the sector surgeon, USMEPCOM surgeon, or respective Service's Surgeon General via medical waiver). However, in all other matters (e.g., section administration, medical supply, medical maintenance, etc.), the MEPS commander has final authority. Any guidance in these matters from sectors or USMEPCOM should be through Command channels rather than medical technical channels.

Fee-Basis Physicians
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 40-1)

When indicated by physical examination workload projections, MEPS commanders may employ additional civilian physicians, on a fee basis, to assist the CMO in accomplishing the medical workload. These doctors are referred to as Fee-Basis Physicians (FBP). Only doctors of medicine and doctors of osteopathy who are fully licensed to practice medicine and surgery in a state or territory of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may be employed as FBPs. Before their employment at the MEPS, FBPs must be approved by HQ USMEPCOM using procedures outlined *in USMEPCOM Reg 40-1 Chapter 4.*

Tools for Management

There are two very important things you must do in the administration area of your medical section. Ensure HIV/DAT procedures are always followed to prevent both HIV/DAT specimen mismatches and/or cancellations. The best way to ensure that procedures are followed is through periodic inspections of ZHM002 (Drug and Alcohol Results Roster), ZHM005 (HIV Results Roster), USMEPCOM Form 40-8-4-R (Drug Testing Control Log), and USMEPCOM Form 40-8-6-R (HIV Control Log) and the urinalysis process. Specimen mismatches cause the MEPS Lab Technician to take extra time from his/her day to solve the error and submit correct data to Sector and/or HQ USMEPCOM. Worse yet are specimen cancellations that require the applicant to return to the MEPS to retest, causing an inconvenience to the applicant and additional funding to be spent bringing him/her back to the MEPS. Hence, the section's daily goal should be zero specimen mismatches or cancellations.

You must also monitor the number of "C-cases" (Basic Training discharges due to medical conditions that should have been discovered by your CMO or "Existed Prior to Service"). Through monitoring "C-cases" you can determine, in broad terms, how tightly the CMO has been adhering to Service standards. The goal of your section and CMO should be zero "C-cases".

Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Drug and Alcohol Test
(Reference: USMEPCOM 40-8)

Each day, MEPS medical technicians draw blood from applicants for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) testing, and urine samples for drug and alcohol testing (DAT). It is critical that no errors be made in the administration, packaging, and chain of custody. The testing lab will dump all samples with any errors rather than allow any questionable results in the system. One of the MEPS officers should check HIV/DAT paperwork on a daily basis. This consists of verifying that all social security and sample numbers cross check, that bottles are initialed and dated, that the forms all have dates, signatures, and lock numbers in the correct spaces, and that logs are kept.

Consults

Specialty consultations and other Services may be requested by the MEPS, when required, from other Federal, military, or civilian medical facilities. These are medical Services the MEPS do not offer and/or The CMO requests supplemental expert opinions to correctly determine whether an applicant is medically qualified for military Service. However, the final responsibility for determination of the applicant's medical fitness for military Service remains with the CMO, regardless of recommendations by specialty consultants. Examples of common consults: orthopedic, psychiatric, ear wax removal etc.

Chapter 7 - Processing Section

General Overview
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 601-23)
(Reference: AR 601-270)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 680-1/3)

The Processing Section is essentially the "heart" of the MEPS. The personnel in this section are first seen by the applicants as they check-in at the MEPS Control Desk and seen last after they have sworn in into the DEP, and access for the Guard or Reserves. This section is responsible for the following:

     1. Directing applicants between processing stages (e.g., to the Testing Section to take the ASVAB, to the Medical Section to take an examination; and to the Service liaisons for job selection).

     2. Perform the PEIs, PAIs, applicant fingerprinting, applicant travel and pre-Oath of Enlistment briefings.

     3. Classify and distribute paperwork within applicant enlistment packets to the appropriate finance center, personnel center, and recruiting command of the Service branch the applicant has enlisted into. (This is commonly known as "packet breakdown".)

     4. Prepare applicant travel orders, airline and/or bus tickets, and meal vouchers.

     5. Arrange applicant transportation to/from the airport, bus station, or hotel.

     6. Maintain and manage ENTNAC submissions and applicant files in the MEPS Files Room.

     7. Perform morning and evening (final) MIRS transaction communications and reconciliation.

Further processing duties are broken down as follows:

Processing NCOIC

     1. Ensure areas of special emphasis are assigned and such tasks are completed accurately on a daily basis (e.g., packet breakdown; comparing the USMEPCOM Form 727-Es with information contained in MIRS; Quality Review Process (QRP); quality review of ENTNAC submissions; applicant travel; applicant orders preparation).

     2. Ensure all training is documented IAW USMEPCOM guidance.

     3. Ensure processing policies and procedures are followed.

     4. Reconcile the DEP and Accession Rosters to the USMEPCOM Form 727-E daily to ensure names and processing numbers match on both forms.

     5. Ensure morning MIRS communications are performed.

     6. Review daily morning and evening reconciliation's of the applicant processing workload.

     7.   Verify daily workload has been communicated to the HQ host system.

     8. Ensure reconciliation of the Electronic Fingerprint Capturing Station is being accomplished.

Human Resource Assistants (HRAs)

1. Perform the PEIs, PAIs, applicant fingerprinting, applicant travel briefs, packet breakdown tasks, applicant orders preparation, and preparing applicants for the Oath of Enlistment ceremony.

2. Enter correct applicant data into MIRS and review the applicant's USMEPCOM Form 714A-E against the 714ADP to ensure data has been correctly entered into MIRS. Report any MIRS problems to the Information Technology Specialist (ITS).

3. Assist the Processing NCOIC in performing daily QRP, morning and evening communications and reconciliation's, quality review of ENTNAC submissions.

Files Room Clerk/Control Desk - Applicant Tracking

1.   Properly maintains applicant files.

2.   Ensure all applicant files are properly checked out to other sections, Service liaisons, and other MEPS.

3.   Review the Overdue Packet Roster (ZHM126) daily to track down missing or late files.

4.   Reviews the Purge Roster (ZHM103) daily.

5.   Ensure the Duplicate Records List (ZHM122) is reviewed and resolved at least semiannually.

Travel NCOIC/Clerk:

1. Coordinates with Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) for approved passenger standing route orders (PSROs) to transport applicants to basic training.

2. Coordinates with Carlson/Wagonlit Travel Agency or an equivalent agency for airline tickets for applicant travel to basic training sites. Also, coordinates for any necessary bus tickets to transport applicants to basic training or from the airport to the basic training site.

3. Manages and issues meal vouchers to applicants for meals during travel to basic training.

4. Briefs travel instructions to applicants headed for basic training.

5. Arranges transportation for applicants from the MEPS to the airport, bus station, or hotel.

6. Responsible for procuring airline tickets for services shippers, using each service GOV credit card or fund cite.

7. Verify and reconciliate monthly bills for each service shippers airline ticket purchases.

Quality Review Program (QRP)

The purpose of the QRP is to ensure each projected applicant is eligible to process the next day. Each MEPS conducts a daily QRP on all records of applicants who are projected to process at the MEPS the next day. Normally conducted in the late morning or early afternoon, the QRP involves representatives from each section of the MEPS Operations Group (Testing, Medical, Processing) who check for missing or incorrect information/paperwork in the applicants' files. Discrepancies are immediately reported to the appropriate

Service counselor to correct applicant information or to obtain the necessary forms or other paperwork to allow for the timely processing of the projected applicants. If conducted correctly, the QRP prevents potential applicant processing delays and allows each applicant to complete enlistment processing the day he/she is brought to the MEPS.

Chapter 8 - MEPCOM Integrated Resource System (MIRS)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 680-1/3)

MIRS is the database in which applicant data is entered and recorded to facilitate applicant processing. MIRS provides the Armed Services with automated personnel records, quality control in recording, coding, and transmission of data. This system is the lifeline of the MEPS. It is imperative all MEPS personnel are trained and continue to train on this system.

USMEPCOM Policy Memorandum 2-1, MIRS Operational Policy and Procedural Guidance, is the official document that establishes MIRS policies, procedures and responsibilities for implementation and adherence by all USMEPCOM units and personnel and Service liaisons. This memorandum is to be used until USMEPCOM Reg 680-3 is published.   It outlines "How to" information, in detail, in the following areas: testing, medical, processing, applicant tracking, recruiting Service use and responsibilities, communications, utilities, abbreviations and terms.

MIRS Management Utilities

The MIRS system has seven modules that allows MEPS/Service personnel to input and track applicant/enlistee data. The seven modules are: Testing, Medical, Operations, Tracking, Services, Communications, and Utilities. As the OPSO, you and the MEPS Information Technology Specialist (ITS) must determine who has the authority to input/retrieve data pertaining to each section. For example, medical personnel can't access the aptitude module.

Communications--MIRS Reports

You are responsible for monitoring certain reports and briefing them to the MEPS commander and/or to sector. These reports are : the ENTNAC Status Report (ZHM001), Drug and Alcohol Results Roster (ZHM002),ENTNAC Submission Roster (ZHM003), HIV Results Roster (ZHM005), Testing Roster (ZHM080), DEP-in Roster (ZHM082), Accession Roster (ZHM085), ATS Results Roster (ZHM088), Projected DEP-out Roster (ZM102), Purge Roster (ZHM103S/A), Communication Report (ZHM108), Duplicate Records Roster (ZHM122), and the Overdue Packet Roster (ZHM126).

Periodically, you will need to check on pending HIV and DAT results. It usually takes anywhere from 3-5 days to receive HIV and DAT results. The MEPS Lab Technician posts these results on the applicants' physical. When reviewing these rosters, there may be a few tests of which the results have been pending for more than 30 days. Too many unresolved tests will become a major problem if not closely monitored.

Receipt of automated ENTNAC results may take up to 21 days after submission. You'll need to monitor this roster for pending results. If you don't receive results within 21 days, notify Sector immediately.

In accordance with USMEPCOM Reg 601-23 and USMEPCOM Policy Memorandum 2-1, the Duplicate Records Roster is required to be reviewed semi-annually. However, this roster should be reviewed on a monthly, if not weekly, basis. The Overdue Packet Roster is required to be reconciled on a daily basis. This roster indicates applicant records that need to be returned to the Files Room and helps you determine if your personnel are checking in/out records correctly. Although each MEPS may have a different policy on who monitors these reports, the ITS and the Processing NCOIC are usually responsible for the Duplicate Records and Overdue Packet Rosters respectively.

MEPS Information Technology Specialist

The Information Technology Specialist (ITS) is normally directly supervised by the Operations Officer and the position is assigned with the Operations Group.

Systems administration relates to all computer systems and software in the MEPS that are MEPS-owned.

The ITS is responsible for:

       1. Stand-alone personal computers, laptop computers, and all peripheral devices (printers, modems, CD-ROM units, scanners, etc.).

       2. MIRS equipment in the MEPS and recruiting Service liaison offices, including PCS, X-terminals, printers, wand scanners and CCD guns, decoders, label printers, OpScan 8, hubs, modems, server, un-interruptible power supply units, etc.

       3. CAT-ASVAB equipment including the server, all PCs, un-interruptible power supply, etc.

       4. All Recruiting Station Network or Wide Area Network (RSN/WAN) equipment currently being installed in the MEPS.

       5. Installation, maintenance, update, and removal of all software loaded on the computer systems in the MEPS (i.e. EFCS machines and OMARs).

The ITS is also the MEPS Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO). The ISSO is responsible for conducting/documenting initial, periodic, and annual security briefings and awareness training for all computer operators in the MEPS, including Service liaisons.

The ITS is not responsible for Service-owned computer systems.

Chapter 9 - Headquarters Group

General Overview

The Headquarters Group is responsible for the administrative, logistic, and budgetary management of the MEPS. This section consists of the MEPS First Sergeant (1SG)/Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA), MEPS Secretary, Budget Technician, and Supply Technician (Assistant Budget Technician and Personnel Clerk at selected MEPS that meet the requirements for these positions).

First Sergeant(1SG)/Senior Enlisted Advisor(SEA):
In addition to being the MEPS commander's advisor and executor on all enlisted military and civilian personnel issues, the 1SG/SEA normally takes care of military/civilian training and physical fitness training/testing. The 1SG/SEA also traditionally serves as the Contracting Officer Representative for the applicant noon meal and hotel contracts and as coordinator of periodic recruiter orientation briefings.

Secretary: *(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 25-32)*
The MEPS secretary serves as the administrative assistant to the MEPS commander. The MEPS Secretary also serves as the MEPS administrative/orderly clerk, juggling several additional duties such as the MEPS Forms Management/Publications Officer, Files Manager, Joint Personnel System (JPS) administrator, and Primary Mail Clerk. The secretary is involved extensively in the preparation and processing of military and civilian awards, evaluations, leaves/passes, personnel actions, and inprocessing/outprocessing. Some of the larger MEPS are authorized a unit/administrative clerk in addition to the Secretary to perform most of the aforementioned administrative tasks.

Budget Technician:
The Budget Technician serves as the primary advisor to the commander concerning funding and budget issues and prepares and monitors the MEPS budget. Availability of funds for equipment, supplies, TDYs, furniture, training, applicant meals and lodging, medical specialty consultations, local transportation for applicants, and applicant noon meals are coordinated, verified and, if necessary, requested by the Budget Technician.

Assistant Budget Technician (ABT):
The ABT serves as the Budget Technician's "right-hand". He/she prepares pay vouchers and related financial paperwork to authorize payment for MEPS expenditures. The ABT works closely with the Services in verifying and authorizing payment for applicant meals and lodging and noon meals and submits paperwork to the appropriate finance centers in a timely manner to ensure prompt payment to vendors. In addition, the ABT assists in the preparation and submission of the MEPS budget to HQ USMEPCOM.

Supply Technician:
The Supply Technician is responsible for the logistical issues of the MEPS. He/she purchases and maintains document registers (and the "property book") on all equipment and supplies for the MEPS. The Supply Technician prepares and maintains records on all hand-receipts (and sub hand-receipts) of equipment issued to MEPS personnel and Service liaisons. He/she also serves as the dispatcher of Government-owned vehicles (GOVs) issued to the MEPS and is responsible for GOV care and maintenance.

Remember...

You should get involved (if not already included) in the budget preparation process of your MEPS. This will allow you to submit requests for training for your personnel, repair/equip/supply the needs of your sections, and future TDYs for you and/or your personnel to USMEPCOM-related events (e.g., OPSO courses, Medical NCOIC/CMO conference, visits to other MEPS to see how they work and get ideas - also known as "cross-walks", etc.). Also, you'll want to be involved in the "mid-year" and/or "end-of-year" budget reviews to

submit funding requests that you didn't foresee during the initial budget preparation process or receive when HQ USMEPCOM approved the annual budget.

As acting commander, you may be involved in budget issues that may arise while your commander is away. Occasionally, you should get with the Budget Tech to gain an understanding of his/her job and the MEPS budget/funding process and receive any new information concerning USMEPCOM funding. This will help you make sound decisions, if necessary, pertaining to the budget issues while you are acting commander. You may also be required to sign documents authorizing the purchase of or payment for supplies, equipment, repairs, or Services. Be sure to review these types of documents with the BAA, and/or supply technician to understand exactly what you are signing.

Chapter 10 - Exceptions to Policy

General

This chapter outlines the guidelines or common sense approach to consider when evaluating an exception to policy. This request is any deviation from the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) concerning the mission or operation of the MEPS. These requests are occasionally received from the recruiting Services to accommodate special applicant circumstances or situations. Exceptions to MEPS policies may include an extension of or change in applicant reporting times, testing times, cutoff times, scheduling, etc. Exceptions to policy DO have an impact on the MEPS process and should be evaluated strictly on a case-by-case basis.

Processing an Exception To Policy

The Service liaison will submit the exception to policy request either verbally or written to MEPS designated personnel. They are normally submitted in writing to the Processing NCOIC or to MEPS designated personnel. In the absence of the Processing NCOIC or locally designated MEPS personnel, the Service liaison will submit the request to the control desk personnel who, in turn, will route the request through the operational chain of command. All requests must be coordinated with the sections involved. A MEPS official will notify the liaison whether or not the request was approved or disapproved. The section supervisors, the officer of the day (either OPSO or the Assistant OPSO), MEPS designated personnel, or the Commander has the authority to approve an exception to policy; however, only the Commander or Acting Commander has the authority to disapprove a request (unless delegated down to the OPSO and Operations NCOIC).

Elements to Consider

There are two basic types of policies, USMEPCOM regulations/policies and local policies/procedures. USMEPCOM regulations and policies are directive in nature and cannot be negotiated at the local level. Local policies and procedures are designed to enhance and improve the operation of the MEPS. It is recognized that exceptions to local policies/procedures are requested, on occasion, to accommodate special situations. You should consider the following factors in approving/disapproving an exception to policy request:

Applicants:
The mission of the MEPS is to qualify applicants and ship recruits for military and federal Service during peacetime and mobilization, and conduct the DoD Student Testing Program. To complete our mission, we must recognize that the applicant is our primary customer at hand and providing high quality customer Service is a daily goal. Establishing a strong Red Carpet Program and focusing on a customer Service policy are means to ensure the applicant feels welcome, relaxed, and comfortable throughout his/her visit to the MEPS.

Every possible measure should be taken to ensure the applicant is properly processed. There are exceptions to every rule and regulation. Mistakes and miscommunications are bound to happen. Whether the applicant, recruiter, Service liaison, or MEPS personnel makes a mistake or miscommunicates in some way, the applicant's welfare and our mission should continue to be our main concern. An applicant should not be penalized or mistreated in any way due to another person's negligence. Each and every applicant is the military's future. We, as OPSOs, should take every opportunity to ensure that every applicant is properly processed within allowable limits.

Support of the Command:
In order to make sound decisions and provide adequate leadership and guidance, you must have the support of your command. Having the support of the command not only means the senior and junior personnel at the

MEPS believe your decisions are sound in judgment and IAW pertinent regulations, but also means your folks empower you to make those decisions. Approving or disapproving exceptions to policy will test the support of the command. Not all of your decisions will be popular, but those decisions must be enforced, carried out, and defensible. Once a decision has been made, inform the individuals that may be impacted and sometimes it's a good ideal to tell them what rationale was involved in the decision-making process. Your leadership, confidence, and abilities will be enhanced through the successful use of this power.

If you have and understand the support of the command, you can provide the direction and guidance needed to accomplish the mission of the MEPS. With the mission of qualifying and enlisting applicants for military Service on a daily basis, special circumstances or exceptions will definitely occur, and you will need to be involved when the Services desire to overcome these special circumstances. The support of the command at the local, sector, and headquarters level is vital to your leadership as an OPSO and the overall operation of the MEPS. Your task as an OPSO is to ask questions. What decisions or actions will be supported up the chain of command? Why or why not? What are the philosophies and/or desired trends at the local, sector, and headquarters level? Having knowledge of this information will enable you to make sound decisions consistently. Consistency plays a big part in your daily planning of various resources and greatly affects the morale of your personnel.

Morale:
As with any unit or command, the morale of the personnel greatly affects its operating proficiency. Approving an exception to policy in a "carte blanche" manner will erode and undermine the morale and welfare of the MEPS personnel. MEPS personnel should know their work schedule and be assured they can make personal arrangements around their work schedule. Exception to policy requests should be strongly critiqued and approved/disapproved on a case-by-case basis to avoid exceptions becoming the "rule". Knowing what to expect at work and how much work to expect will influence the productivity, work satisfaction, self-esteem, professionalism, retention of personnel, etc.

For you to be effective in the OPSO role, your personnel need to know and understand that you are looking out for their welfare and protecting them as much as possible; they are also one of your customers. Your demonstration of leadership, whether it be through the enforcement of rules and regulations, showing sensitivity to personal needs, or maintaining peace and order by whatever means, will determine the dedication, loyalty, and morale of the MEPS personnel. Personnel productivity and morale will increase if they perceive an "exception to policies" are being completed for sound, logical reasons and informed as of such. **Remember, as long as it doesn't create chaos or jeopardize qualifications standards--it may be workable.**

Resources:
The various resources of a MEPS including personnel, facilities, and financial resources are affected by exception to policies. As OPSOs, we must always be aware of our current resources. Exception to policies may be granted when the situation allows you to help the customer without exceeding your resources. Some of the questions to be asked or items to be considered when an exception to policy is submitted concerning the manpower, facilities, and financial resources are:

1. Manpower.
- What are the capabilities of the present staff? Can we perform the requested action?
- What is the availability of additional medical doctors, if needed, to support the request?
- What is the current workload of the CMO?

2. Facilities.
- Is additional lodging available, if needed?
- Is the facility properly heated/cooled, lighted, etc., if requesting an extension of time?
- Are the MIRS computers operational for communicating with the host, if extension of time is requested?

3. Financial resources.
- Will tax dollars be saved or wasted?
- Will overtime have to be paid, if request is approved?
- Will it be cost-effective to grant the request, i.e., to keep MEPS open after normal working hours?
- Will MEPS incur additional costs, i.e., transportation costs, medical costs, etc?

Historical Decisions:
As the OPSO, it is important to know and understand what decisions were made in the past and why those decisions were made. Ask questions -- talk to your commander to find out what his/her particular policies are and their intent. Next, talk to the liaisons -- what types or kinds of exceptions do they request, how often, and why do they request them? What are the driving factors behind the requests? What happens if the request is denied? And so on. It is very important early in your tour that you know the baseline of your MEPS in decision-making processes. After that, it is imperative that you are consistent with your decisions to avoid discrimination or the perception of discrimination against a Service. Being consistent in your decision making will prevent exceptions from becoming the "rule".

Alternatives:
The final option to weigh when considering an exception to policy is the availability of options or alternatives. Our focus, as OPSOs, should be on providing the best possible process for qualifying and enlisting applicants into the military Service. Saying "no" to an exception request does not necessarily mean denying the Service's request. Other alternatives may satisfy the Service's needs and those needs of the MEPS without compromising the quality of your Service or the quality of life of your personnel. Providing alternatives means compromising on the part of the requesting Service and on your part as well.

1. Flexibility and innovation - Flexibility and innovation are the keys to providing alternatives. Examples of items to consider when weighing an alternative are the Service's needs, time actually required to complete the required processing, your relationship with the IRC, and of course Extended Hours Processing Support/Mission Day. These items may not be familiar to you at first, but in time you will discover that each plays an integral part in your decision-making process. These are not the only options to consider since each MEPS is unique and different from others and usually each individual situation is somewhat different from the last.

2. Options - Before you deny the request, alternatives or options need to be considered which may end up in a "win win" situation and meeting the intent of the exception to policy. Such options are:
- Can the applicant be tested today and finish processing tomorrow?
- Can the applicant arrive at the MEPS at an earlier time in order to complete the processing earlier?

By offering and providing flexible, innovative, and creative alternatives, the Service's needs may be met and your workload may actually be reduced. In compromising or providing some options to the Services, success can be obtained, which means an applicant will be processed. After evaluating each option, the answer may still be "no". Establishing yourself as one who considers the alternatives will prove to be invaluable over time.

The Services may begin to consider the options first themselves, thus eliminating the need for your direct involvement. In short, give what you can when you can and hold firm to your decisions. Ensure your decisions are in line with USMEPCOM rules, regulations, and policies and that your chain of command is informed of your decisions. The options may not always be pleasant, but neither are the consequences.

Case Studies

Case Study #1:
"A Service liaison requests an exception to policy to process an USAF applicant, a local resident, who exceeded the daily projection cutoff time for a local walk-in applicant. This applicant requires a full medical examination and processing for DEP-In status. It is the 15th of the month and your MEPS is fully staffed".
Evaluate this case study with your particular MEPS in mind. Apply the six elements listed above to your MEPS. There is no one right or wrong answer. Remember to evaluate all the elements before approving/disapproving the request. Would your decision change if the elements changed? How? Why?

Case Study #2:
"A Service liaison requests an exception to policy to bring a late arrival on the floor (estimated time of arrival to the MEPS is 2 hours). This applicant is a walk-in shipper. You find out there are no current seats available for that particular Service to that destination. Your MEPS has a moderate medical workload scheduled today although it is a heavy ship day for one of the Services. Also, the Service requesting the exception to policy is one who repeatedly submits numerous requests of this nature and does not believe they need to change their way of operation".
Evaluate this case study with your particular MEPS in mind. Would your decision be different if the circumstances, elements, or timing were different? If so, how and why?

Chapter 11 - Inspections/Staff Visits

Commander's Inspection Program (CIP)
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 20-1)

The CIP is an inspection program that your MEPS conducts internally. Approved by your Commander, the CIP is essentially a "self-inspection" program to ensure that your MEPS conducts its operations IAW USMEPCOM regulations and policies. The CIP covers:

- Applicant Processing, Files, Transportation
- Packet Breakdown and Applicant/Enlistee Orders Preparation
- Oath of Enlistment Ceremonies
- Applicant and Student/High School Testing
- Medical Processing, HIV/DAT procedures
- AVMF
- Supply
- Budget, Financial Transactions
- Administrative Tasks (Publications, Forms, PIMS, Postal procedures)
- Physical Security

Using USMEPCOM Reg 20-1, the inspection can be performed at the Commander's discretion as long as it is conducted semi-annually. Conducting an effective CIP is essential for your MEPS to succeed during USMEPCOM Inspector General (IG) inspections.

Compliance/Training and Assistance Visit (CTAV) and Sector Assistance Visit (SAV)

a. **Eastern Sector:** Every 18-24 months, Sector will visit your MEPS to ensure that operations are conducted IAW USMEPCOM standards. Like the CIP, the CTAV team uses USMEPCOM Circular 20-4 and internal management control checklists for the basis of their assistance visit and trains in the areas that the CIP covers. However, they will also check to make sure that your MEPS aren't repeating violations found during the previous CTAV and USMEPCOM IG inspections. Consequently, the mission of the CTAV team is identify existing problems, determine their root cause, effects, provide training where needed, assess the impact on mission accomplishment and recommend corrective actions. Also, identify outstanding personnel and management methods. Don't view a SAV/CTAV as a "do or die" formalized inspection because it isn't intended for that purpose. The CTAV team is there to assist your MEPS; hence, this is the time to ask questions, clarify issues and misinterpretations of the USMEPCOM regulations and policies, get training where needed, and correct major/minor errors so your MEPS can do well during an IG inspection.

b. **Western Sector:** Every 18-24 months, Sector will visit your MEPS to ensure that operations are conducted IAW USMEPCOM standards. Like the CIP, the SAV team uses USMEPCOM Circular 20-4 and Sector and internal checklists for the basis of the their assistance visit and trains in the areas that the CIP covers. However, they will also check to make sure that your MEPS are not repeating violations found during the previous SAV, CIP, and IG inspection. Don't view a SAV as a "do or die" inspection, because it isn't intended for that purpose. The SAV team is there to assess, train, and assist your MEPS; hence, this is the time to ask questions, clarify issues and misinterpretations of the USMEPCOM regulations and policies, get training were needed, and identify and correct major/minor errors in your MEPS.

USMEPCOM IG Inspection
(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 20-1)

Each MEPS will be inspected by an USMEPCOM IG team, approximately every 18-24 months. This inspection serves as an indicator to your Commander, Sector, and USMEPCOM Commander of how well your MEPS conducts its operations. Like the CIP, the USMEPCOM IG team uses USMEPCOM Circular 20-4 and internal management checklists as the basis of their inspection, they will also check to make sure that your MEPS aren't repeating violations found during the previous IG inspection. Also, they will solicit any ideas/suggestions for improvement your MEPS may desire to pass onto USMEPCOM and other MEPS and recognize personnel in any inspectable area they achieved excellence. Although IG findings cannot be used in favor of or against personnel evaluations or awards, the IG inspection allows a great opportunity for your personnel and the whole station to "shine".

Tips

Here are some tips that may help you and your MEPS succeed in your CIP and during an IG inspection:

1. Keep a file of previous SAV/CTAV and IG (at least two of each) inspection results conducted at your MEPS. You'll want to review these results to identify weak/problem areas and ensure that these areas are corrected.

2. Keep a file of quarterly USMEPCOM IG newsletter's (at least a year's worth). Published at HQ USMEPCOM, these "trends" identify deficiencies noted on IG inspections at other MEPS and, with careful review, can help in preventing these same errors at your MEPS.

3. Talk with OPSOs at other MEPS. If another MEPS has had a recent IG inspection, your counterpart can provide valuable advice as to what the IG is looking for and the areas to "tighten up". And vice versa -- if your MEPS has had a recent IG inspection and you know another MEPS undergoing an IG inspection, it would be a great idea to call the OPSO at that particular MEPS to help him/her out.

4. Have an aggressive CIP with inspectors who grade "hard" in all inspectable areas. Although one should not overly "nit-pick", inspectors should meticulously check that operations/procedures performed in each inspectable area are fully justified and supported by USMEPCOM policies and regulations. In doing so, a sound CIP inspection will ensure success during a SAV/CTAV and an IG inspection.

5. Do not "pencil whip" your CIP checklists. Doing this will only hurt you and your MEPS. Not taking a CIP seriously only serves to mask deficiencies that exist in each section. Instead, ensure whoever is conducting the CIP for a section asks the five basic questions: who, what, when, where, and how.   In addition, ensure two essential statements are added to those questions – "prove it" and "show me."

6. Start preparing for the IG now. Even if you are not due for a visit for another six months, start preparing now. This will ensure that you do not cut any corners in your preparations and review processes. The checklists you use to prepare for the IG should be the same ones the IG uses.

7. Nickels and dimes count. Small hits on an inspection add up, whether it be you conducting a periodic CIP, or the IG making and official visit.

8. If in your preparations you find that you did something wrong and it cannot be corrected, admit it. Write a Memorandum for the Record stating what the problem is, how you found it, and what was done to ensure that it will not happen in the future.

9. When it comes to AVMF, three words: documentation, documentation, documentation. Make sure you document events and functions sufficiently so that an outsider with no experience with AVMF can

look at the records and tell what happened, who was there, how it was administered, etc. The regulation does not call for a lot of documentation, however, making the accountability trail as easy to follow as possible will increase your chances of passing an inspection with flying colors.

10. Look professional. Ensure all of your MEPS local forms are fresh copies and up to date. This tip also applies to virtually every other aspect of the MEPS.

11. Ensure you have all records, documents, etc, are readily available; make sure everyone else knows where they are also. If you have to run around the MEPS trying to locate items the IG team needs, you will look like you do not know what you are doing.

12. Take discrepancies found by the IG and learn from them.

Chapter 12 - Personnel Administration

Military Evaluation Systems and Awards
(Reference : USMEPCOM Reg 600-23)

Rating Scheme:
Probably the most important facet of military personnel management for all branches of the rmed Services is the rating system. It is extremely important for each member of the MEPS to be aware of who is going to prepare his or her performance evaluation report. To ensure each member is aware of who writes and endorses each performance report, a rating scheme must be posted and a copy given to each individual under your supervision. Deviations from this rating scheme are not authorized.

Evaluations:
Each Service has its own evaluation requirements. The commonality between all branches of the Armed Forces is periodic counseling during the evaluation reporting period. This is crucial in providing feedback to subordinates on their performance. As a quick reference, the following table is provided to help manage these requirements and ensure that utmost attention is paid to the professional development of your subordinates. All military personnel evaluation reports must be routed thru your Sector headquarters (in the case of Marine fit-reps, Sector performs an administrative review and attaches a memorandum/letter of review to accompany each fit-rep to Marine Corps headquarters).

Officers

Service	Form	Reference	Required Counseling	Evaluations
Army	DA 67-9-1 (O1/O2)	AR 623-105	Initial Counseling completed within 30 days of arrival	Reports are generated by events (Change of Rater, annual, etc…)
			Officer maintains working copy	
Air Force	AF 707B	AFI 36-2403	Within 60 days into the rating period	Annual/Change of Reporting Official
			Progress check 6 months thereafter	
Navy	NAVPERS 1610/2	BUPERSINST 1610	Mid-term counseling due at 6-month point	Transfer/Annual
			Counseling dates determined by rank	
			O1: August/February	
			O2: May/November	
			O3: July	
Marine Corps	Command Discretion	MCO P1610.7 (w/changes 1&2)	Within first 30 days of new rating period	Transfer/Annual
			O1: April and October	
			O2: March and September	
			O3: January, April and October	
Coast Guard		M1000.6A, Chp 10	O1: March and September	
			O2: July and January	
			O3 May	

Enlisted

Service	Form	Reference	Required Counseling	Evaluations
Army	DA Form 2166-8-1 DA Form 2166-8	AR 623-205	Initial Counseling completed within 30 days of arrival ; then quarterly	Reports are generated by events (Change of Rater, annual, etc…)
Air Force	AF Form 910/931 (E1-E6) AF Form 911/932 (E7-E9)	AFI 36-2403	- Within 60 days of Supervision - Midterm - Follow-up (E-6) and below	Annual/Change of Reporting Official
			Progress check 6 months thereafter	
Navy	NAVPERS 1610/2	BUPERSINST 1610.10	Mid-term counseling due at 6-month point	Transfer/Annual
			E5: September	
			E6: May	
			E7: March	
Marine Corps		MCO P1610.7 (w/changes 1&2)	Within first 30 days of new rating period	Transfer/Annual
			E5: August	
			E6: June	
			E7: June	
			Reporting Senior must be an officer	
Coast Guard		M1000.6A, Chp 10		E5: April/October
				E6: May/November
				E7: September

Awards:
An active awards program is essential to the success of any organization. The awards program helps to motivate all personnel to excel in the performance of their duties and recognize their outstanding accomplishments. Additionally, the MEPS Commander should have a local awards program in place to enhance the morale and efficiency of the station. Examples of local awards are the Military and Civilian Member of the Quarter. Other awards include, but are not limited to:

    1. Military End-of-Tour Awards. End-of-Tour awards are a way to recognize exceptional achievement of military members. USMEPCOM has established a time frame for each level of award. These time lines should be verified with your Sector prior to submission:

Defense Meritorious Service Medal   -   to Sector 180 days prior to presentation date
Joint Service Commendation Medal   -   to Sector 90 days prior to presentation date
Joint Service Achievement Medal   -   to Sector 60 days prior to presentation date

It is important to manage departure dates of all assigned personnel. This will help ensure that departing individuals deserving an award will receive timely recognition for a job well done. The Secretary, Administrative Clerk, and/or 1SG of your MEPS will be able to provide this information to you. Refer to the USMEPCOM Awards Handbook for further guidance.

    2. Incentive Awards. *(Reference: AR 672-20)* The incentive awards program has been established to encourage the fullest participation of civilian employees and military personnel in improving Government operations.

3. Civilian Awards Program. *(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 690-13, Chap 4)* The civilian awards program includes monetary awards, honorary awards, public service awards, and miscellaneous awards. The qualifications and procedures for nominating individuals for these awards can be found in chapter 4 of the regulation.

4. Suggestion Program. *(Reference: USMEPCOM Reg 690-13)* The suggestion program is established to recognize and reward civilian employees and military personnel for suggestions, inventions, and scientific achievements contributing to efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations that are above those normally expected.

Civilian Personnel Office (CPO) and
Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES)

TAPES:
The TAPES is the civilian equivalent of military performance evaluation reports. There are two rating systems under TAPES -- Base System and Senior System. The Base System of TAPES covers GS-1 through GS-8 employees. The Senior Reporting System covers GS-9 and above employees. For any specific questions or problems concerning your civilian employees, contact the CPO at USMEPCOM or your local servicing CPO.

1. Base System employees rating period is birthday plus 1 year. One mandatory performance progress review is required at the mid-point of the rating period. The midpoint review is the birthday plus 6 months. DA Form 7223-1 (Counseling Checklist) is utilized to record counseling on the employee. Additional counseling other than the midpoint review is optional and left to the discretion of the rater. DA Form 7223 (Base System Evaluation Report) is the actual evaluation report.

2. Senior System employees rating period is 1 Nov - 31 Oct for GS-9 through 12 and 1 Jul - 30 Jun for GS-13 and above. One mandatory performance progress review is required at the midpoint of the rating period. The midpoint review is in May for GS-9 through 12 and December for GS-13 and above. All Senior System employees are required to submit Support Form (DA Form 7222-1). DA Form 7223-1 (Counseling Checklist) is utilized to record counseling on the employee. Additional counseling other than the midpoint review is optional and left to the discretion of the rater. DA Form 7223 is the actual evaluation report.

This Performance Appraisal Program is designed to provide for establishment of job performance elements and performance standards, monitoring employee progress in meeting their work plan, rating the employee and the end of the rating period, and using the results of the rating for training, rewarding, promoting, retaining, reassigning, demoting, determining merit pay, granting within grade and quality step increases, and assisting employees in improving performance.

Appeals and Grievances:
An Appeal is a written request by an employee for reconsideration of a decision which has reduced basic pay and grade, which involuntarily places them in a non-pay, non-duty status, or which separates them from federal Service. A grievance is a request by an employee, or group acting as individuals, for personal relief in a matter of concern or dissatisfaction that is subject to management control.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Applicable to military and civilian employees):
The objective is to provide a work environment where all employees regardless of their sex, age, race, color religion, national origin, or non-disqualifying physical or mental handicap can participate and advance to their highest potential.

Joint Personnel System (JPS)

JPS is a system that allows HQ USMEPCOM, Sectors, and MEPS access to personnel information for their Command. HQ USMEPCOM uses the information for strength management, personnel accounting, and replacement tracking. The MEPS uses the system to develop the Key Personnel Roster and process security requests. The evaluation information is provided to give Commanders and supervisors a suspense tool to monitor reports. The MEPS Secretary and/or Administrative Clerk has the required knowledge to answer any specific questions on JPS.

Civilian Time Attendance

A full-time government civilian employee has an 8-hour daily work requirement, 40-hour weekly work requirement, and 80 hours per Pay Period (biweekly) work requirement.

Civilian employees may vary the length of a workday or work week with prior approval. This is done by earning and using prior approved credit hours. Credit hours must be accrued prior to use and are usually used within the same pay period. A full-time employee may accumulate up to 24 hours for carryover to the subsequent pay period. Hours in excess of 24 hours will be forfeited.

Compensatory hours (Comp time) are earned the same way as credit hours, but must be submitted on USMEPCOM Form 37-2-R-E (Request and Approval for Overtime).   Comp time can be carried over from year to year with no limit. Accrued Comp time in excess of 1000 hours at the end of a calendar year will automatically convert to overtime pay for the first pay period of the new year.

Time off during an employee's basic work requirement will be charged to the appropriate leave category, credit hours the employee is authorized, compensatory time, or an excused absence.

Civilian employees accrue only 4 hours of Sick Leave per pay period. Time may be advanced, if it is requested in writing and all other available time is exhausted. If an employee is terminated before advanced time is paid back, the individual is still responsible to make restitution for owed time.

Chapter 13 - Training

Training is the single most important ingredient in your success as a MEPS OPSO. Training yourself, your troops, and your customers ensures mission success.

Training Yourself

Immediate Source:
The first thing you must do upon assuming the Operations Officer billet is to find out your Commander's expectations of you. Once you know what the MEPS Commander expects of you, get an overview or "big picture" of how your MEPS operates. One popular method is to simulate going through the entire process as if you were an applicant. As in any new assignment, have everyone around you debrief you to get as much information as you can. Your MEPS employees, Service liaisons and OPSOs, and the applicants on your floor all have insights you may learn from.

You must also review the appropriate regulations that govern the different sections of the MEPS. As the Operations Officer, the MEPS Commander will expect you to be the expert on virtually all matters. You must know what the "boundaries" are in order to be an effective leader.

Spend at least one day with each station of the MEPS to learn the jobs your subordinates do. You cannot effectively lead your personnel without knowing what their jobs entail.

Networking:
There is a wealth of corporate knowledge available throughout USMEPCOM. In time you will build your own network of sources. Your counterpart at your Sector headquarters is a first point of contact as they communicate with many MEPS on a daily basis. They can also recommend highly effective OPSOs for you to contact for advice and assistance -- don't hesitate to call.

Operations Group Leader Course (OGLC):
This 3 ½ day course is taught by functional area experts at HQ USMEPCOM in Chicago. It is an in-depth look at key aspects of your operation meant for new OPSOs. Contact your Sector to arrange to attend at the first possible course.

National Operations Officer Workshop (NOOW):
This annual conference of OPSOs from every MEPS is an ideal opportunity to expand your network. It consists of some training sessions similar to OGLC, time to meet with and discuss issues with Sector OPSOS, dividing OPSOs into groups to work on specific projects, and affords the opportunity for all OPSOs to discuss and compare notes on real MEPS issues. This toolkit is a product of the NOOW.

Crosswalks:
A crosswalk is a TDY spent with your counterpart at another MEPS, usually within your MEPS cluster -- watching their operation, discussing issues, and generally comparing notes. You should have one within your first year in the position. Generally one full day of crosswalk is all that's productive and cost-effective. Travel on one day, and return on the next. Carry copies of SOPs, policy memos, etc. Check with your Commander about any special approval needed if you wish to travel to a MEPS outside your cluster. And remember to thank your host.

Service Mentors:
You should make contact with a more senior officer in your own Service to establish a mentoring relationship with that officer. Likely possibilities include Commanders at other MEPS and officers at your Sector headquarters. Many MEPS are very small organizations, and you may find yourself relatively isolated from the traditions and customs of your own Service. Don't neglect your own

professional development and career opportunities.

IG/SAV Visits:
It is never pleasant being under a microscope, but take advantage of these visits to learn everything you can. Be open to constructive criticism. Depending on circumstances at your particular MEPS, some of the good ideas you hear will not be right for you. On the other hand, some will.

Training Your People

On-the-Job-Training (OJT):
OJT is the primary method of training MEPS personnel. There are several things you should keep in mind about OJT. First, regulations, policies, and procedures change quickly in USMEPCOM. So make sure the content of OJT is still accurate and guard against the tendency to neglect the official reference in favor of what the trainer said (word of mouth). Second, OJT is often poorly planned and carried out haphazardly depending on who is available to train and what tasks are priorities. Learning how everything fits together is every bit as important as specific task performance. Finally, watch out that your people don't get so bogged down in the day-to-day activities that they lose touch with such things as professional development, dress and appearance, military traditions, etc.

Training Days:
Training days are non-processing days set aside for MEPS to conduct training. They are scheduled by HQ USMEPCOM usually the first Friday of one month out of each quarter. Each MEPS has a person with overall responsibility for Training Days, usually the 1SG/SEA, though sometimes a Training NCO or officer. Each Sector publishes a list of mandatory and recommended annual training subjects by memo, but don't limit yourself to that list. Examples of topics: Safety, Fire Prevention, Computer Security, Team Building Exercises, Sexual Harassment, etc.

Mission Essential Qualification Standards (MEQS):
MEQS provides minimum requirements to qualify in a work area within a section. The Standard MEQS booklet contains knowledge items (questions to answer) and performance items (tasks to perform) for each work area. Trainers and trainees sign off each item in order to track qualifications. Periodic Progress Reviews are conducted throughout the year to monitor qualification status. MEQS is a good tool for section supervisors to use in tracking the status of qualification training. However, it is not useful for a macroscopic "at-a-glance" status for large numbers of people. If you need such a tool, you should either build your own status chart or get one from another MEPS.

Crosswalks:
Just as crosswalks are excellent means of getting the training you need and establishing your network as an OPSO, they are also excellent for your subordinates. New personnel, or those assigned to new significant duties, especially in one-deep positions, can learn a lot in 1 or 2 days with a strong counterpart at another MEPS.

Outside Training:
There are numerous opportunities to get outside training for your people. The OGLC is also good training for your Assistant OPSOs and NCOICs. There are also courses and conferences for Medical NCOICs and CMOs, Travel Clerks, AVMF Managers, Test Control Officer's, Commander's and First Sergeant's, Information Technology Specialists, etc. Your servicing CPO should provide training to civilian supervisors. There may be formal courses available for Equal Opportunity representatives and Contracting Officer's Representatives.   Finally, there may be pay courses available from private civilian businesses (e.g., customer Service, communication skills, computers, etc.).

Recruiter for a Day:
Many MEPS have arrangements with recruiting units to have MEPS personnel shadow recruiters for a day. Anything you can do to help improve communications with recruiters and increase your personnel's sensitivity to the demands of recruiting duty will improve your operation.

Physical Training (PT):
You should ensure PT does not interfere with the operation of the MEPS but also supports the PT program in anyway possible. Besides the Service-specific effects on career progression, PT builds morale and cohesion while reducing harmful effects of stress. Including recruiting liaisons in your PT activities can also improve working relations with them.

Emergency Management Assistance Plan (EMAP):
Your EMAP is a mandatory training item. More importantly, it is a critical part of your operation. Ensure all MEPS personnel and recruiting liaisons are fully briefed on its requirements. Brief your IRC on the basics of your plan. Local EMAP exercises are also a great idea (i.e., practice relocating to the alternate location or simulate emergency situations). Not only will it be good training, it will also strengthen morale and cohesion and remind everyone they are in the Armed Forces.

Customer Service:
Customer Service can be learned. Conduct training sessions to respond to feedback (positive and negative) in "How Do We Rate?" forms. Develop effective SOPs and train everyone from them. Conduct frequent refresher training on such things as phone etiquette, professional courtesy, chain of command, and recognizing rank insignia from every Service. Train on communication skills to improve the way in which instructions are given to applicants (both tone and wording). MEPS processing is a novel experience for every MEPS applicant and their families. Training can help your people to remember that when they are faced with the same frustrating situation today, that they handled it so expertly yesterday.

Command Inspection Program (CIP):
The CIP can be a useful training tool in a few ways. It is an excellent lesson plan in itself. It also allows you to identify areas that need training based on CIP findings. Finally, it is useful in developing your NCOs. Don't assign the same person to conduct self-inspections repeatedly. Assign portions to everyone or assign the entire thing on a rotating basis.

Scenarios/Case Studies:
One very effective training technique is to use real examples of problematic situations from your own and other MEPS. Break up your MEPS into groups, with a broad range of expertise in each group. Let each group work on specific problems and then discuss them with everyone. Develop your own from real situations you have handled or heard about from other OPSOs. This tool is very effective in improving MEPS teamwork.

Example: An applicant arrives at the MEPS to take a medical exam. Upon signature verification by MEPS personnel, the applicant's signature has become suspect. What do you do? What are the procedures to be followed?

Training the Customers

Training your customers is a vital link in customer satisfaction. Educate your customers on your Services as well as your limitations. Key limitations include your resources and the rules under which you must operate. Customer satisfaction is more likely when your customer has realistic expectations. Make use of IRC meetings, OPSOs meetings, recruiter orientations, and Reception Center Committee meetings (if applicable). Use applicant briefings (morning welcome brief and pre-enlistment oath briefings) and

visual displays to facilitate realistic expectations for their day at the MEPS. Encourage them to let you know of any complaints they may have. Finally, you definitely can't satisfy expectations you don't know about. Train your customers to help you help them.

Recruiter Orientation

Recruiter orientation is a vital part of establishing good relations with the recruiting Services that utilize your MEPS. These orientations also help to establish in the minds of the recruiters what the MEPS can and cannot do for them. As the Operations Officer, you will most likely be tasked by your Commander to organize and conduct the orientations. Ensure you make the sessions worth the recruiter's time. This will ensure that they get the most out of the session and will to minimize problems with applicant processing in the future. In addition, ensure you or your Commander advertise the session to your IRC members. This will ensure you get maximum participation from the recruiting Services.

Recruiter orientations are normally scheduled on a quarterly basis, however, scheduling will vary from MEPS to MEPS.

Chapter 14 - Recruiting

Recruiting Activity Functions

The local area recruiting activities, at a minimum, are responsible for the following functions:

     1. Scheduling applicants on a daily basis for medical examinations, aptitude testing, enlistments, meals and lodging. Ensure that the projected schedule commits the MEPS to steady workload demands.

     2. Conducting preliminary screening of applicants to ensure that those who are ineligible for ASVAB testing/retesting, are physically unfit (such as overweight), are administratively ineligible, or are non-English speaking are not forwarded to the MEPS for examination.

     3. Ensuring that applicants have been properly identified and possess a valid social security number (SSN) **before** reporting to the MEPS or MET site for examination.

     4. Obtaining parental or legal guardian consent for the medical examination of minors.

     5. Arranging necessary transportation for applicants to the MEPS (or place of lodging when appropriate) or to remote MET site and for return to their residence when applicable.

     6. Explaining procedures that must be followed to receive meals and lodging at the contract facility. Explain rules of conduct expected of applicants during their stay at contract lodging facilities thus providing each applicant with lodging information and ensuring that a copy of the information is included in the packet sent to the MEPS. Also, advise applicants of the Services available at the lodging facility, including those for which a fee is chargeable to them.

     7. Stressing to applicants the importance of reporting to the MEPS on time and in a rested condition and appropriate dress.

     8. Identifying applicants that require special examinations or testing necessary to determine qualifications for specific enlistment programs. Furnish the name of the test site location and the date testing occurred when applicants have been previously tested on the institutional or production ASVAB. Identify prior-Service applicants and specify medical fitness standards to be applied.

     9. Determining the eligibility of applicants for particular Service programs, including enlistment grade or rank, IAW Service personnel procurement directives.

     10. Ensuring military Service obligations and enlistment commitments, including the precise nature of the specific program or option, are explained to applicants before the Oath of Enlistment is administered.

     11. Ensuring applicants and enlistees with military training or school start date commitments are sent to the MEPS for shipment in a timely manner.

     12. Furnishing all applicable data necessary for preparation of assignment, travel, and active duty orders for applicants scheduled to enlist.

     13. Maintaining enlistment documents pertaining to members of the U.S. Army Reserve Alternate Training program (U.S. Army Recruiting Command only).

     14. Forwarding necessary Service-unique forms and documents in sufficient copies to the MEPS

for distribution IAW Service personnel procurement directives.

15. Supporting the institutional testing program prescribed in AR 601-222/AFR 33-6/OPNAVINST 1230.1/MCO 1130.52/CG COMDTINST 1130.13A.

Functions and Duties of the Service Liaisons

Service liaisons work for their respective recruiting Service and serve as the interface between the Service recruiting command and USMEPCOM. Their duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Being knowledgeable on all policy matters and regulations pertaining to enlistment. Understanding the different enlistment programs and the procedures necessary to complete all enlistment documents.

2. Ensuring that quality control standards are met in all enlistment cases.

3. Signing all enlistment documents. Verifying all supporting documents, i.e., High School Diplomas, Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, Marriage Certificates, Divorce Decrees, etc.

4. Ensuring that an enlistment is administratively correct (i.e., that all forms are properly completed with valid information) and that all recruiter checks to verify education, birth, citizenship, and moral status have, in fact, been completed and properly documented.

5. Conducting a separate interview with every applicant. Ensuring that an applicant processing for enlistment into the Service meets the standards/criteria, has not received any help, nor has he/she been counseled to conceal information.

6. Coordinating with the MEPS to schedule applicants for MEPS processing (i.e., mental and/or physical testing, ASVAB testing, etc.) on the USMEPCOM Form 727-E.

7. Ensuring that procedures are established to receive and expeditiously process applicants into the MEPS.

8. Checking the applicant's DD Form 1966 (Record of Military Processing) to ensure accuracy and completeness. Checking the applicant's USMEPCOM Form 714A-E (Request for Examination) to ensure that the applicant is who they say they are, and that his/her case has been properly prepared by the recruiter.
- Check for proof of the applicant's age.
- Ensure that the documents contained in the case file prove the educational level of the individual and that any copies of documents are certified by the recruiter and that he/she personally sighted the originals.
- Determine whether applicants with police records, as indicated on their DD Form 1966, are eligible for a waiver and that all involvement with police authorities have been disclosed on the DD From 1966.

9. Warning the applicant that concealment of any medical, mental, or moral condition, regardless of what may have been told to him/her by their recruiter, if not revealed prior to enlisting may result in discharge.

10. Checking the applicants in/out of the MEPS for processing. Upon completion of specific MEPS processing, obtain the aptitude scores and physical results and verify eligibility for enlistments.

11. Checking documents prepared by MEPS to ensure that all of the applicant's documents, such as his/her DD Form 4 contract, annexes, DD Form 93 (Record of Emergency Data), etc., are correct and reflect the proper educational level, guarantees, etc.

12. Service liaisons have the final responsibility for the following:
- Resolving errors in processing documents and in MEPS generated documents.
- Correcting problems with the applicant's understanding of his/her contract, such as guarantees promised, but not recorded, or a misunderstanding that a guarantee was or was not provided.
- Correcting improperly completed documents in applicant case files.
- Distributing documents contained in applicant case files.

InterService Recruiting Committee (IRC)

The IRC serves as the coordinating body through which harmonious relationships between local recruiting organizations and MEPS are maintained. The IRC will serve as a forum for the coordination, discussion, and resolution of areas of mutual concern; however, they do not have the authority to make operational decisions for the MEPS.

The IRC will consider all matters of mutual interest affecting the accomplishment of recruiting commands and MEPS' missions to include, but not limited to: planning and coordinating events and/or actions that effect local recruiting organizations and MEPS operations, exploring procedures for more efficient processing that would provide better Service to the recruiting Services, managing the Department of Defense (DoD) Student Testing Program, exchanging data and ideas for the purpose of improving applicant processing procedures, and working towards resolution of issues negatively affecting or failing to enhance the ability of the recruiting Services and MEPS to meet their missions.

The IRC is composed of commanders of the Army Recruiting Battalion, Navy Recruiting District or "A" Station, Marine Corps Recruiting Station, Coast Guard District Office, Air Force Recruiting Squadron, and MEPS. Air and Army National Guard (Recruiting and Retention Managers) and Reserve representatives will be invited to all IRC meetings and encouraged to participate. The duties of the chairperson should be rotated on an annual basis among the voting members of the IRC. The chairperson's duties include:

1. Coordination of dates and locations for meetings as agreed upon by members.

2. Establishment of the meeting agenda and schedule from input provided by members and representatives.

3. Initiation of invitations to appropriate organizations and individuals involved in any aspect of recruiting/or MEPS matters, to attend meetings.

4. Preparation and distribution of IRC minutes.

The IRC is ruled by majority vote. When practicable, the Service Commanders and the MEPS Commander will attend IRC meetings. Each recruiting Service member has one vote on matters before the committee. The MEPS Commander is a nonvoting member. Air and Army National Guard and Reserve representatives will be nonvoting members and represented during voting by their active Service counterparts. Approval of the MEPS Commander must be obtained on those matters concerning MEPS resources, capabilities, or mission.

The IRC provides the Service and MEPS a forum to raise and resolve issues that may adversely affect accomplishment of the recruiting mission and MEPS processing. It is expected that such issues will be

Midlevel InterService Recruiting Committee (MIRC) is appropriate (the MIRC is the same thing as the IRC, but represented by members at the Sector level). The recruiting Service that introduced the issue will document the committee action and forward the issue to the MIRC for resolution. However, the IRC concept is not intended to abridge any commander's responsibility and authority to accomplish assigned missions.

The IRC will formally convene on a quarterly basis with additional meetings held as needed. Any IRC member can call for a meeting at any time, consistent with prudent judgement and the availability of Service representatives. The minutes of each IRC meeting will be recorded and distributed within 10 working days to each voting and nonvoting IRC member and each member of its respective MIRC.

Improper Recruiting Practices
(Regulation: USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, Chap 5)

More than likely, you will be confronted with a situation (i.e., during the CMO interview or PEI) when an applicant reveals that he/she was instructed by his/her recruiter not to reveal certain information that may disqualify him/her from entering the military. This is an improper recruiting practice committed by the recruiter, and his/her command must be informed by the Commander (or you in his/her absence) immediately. Depending on additional information revealed, the applicant may be kept from processing further (placed "on hold" - N status) until the new information is researched and clarified by his/her liaison.

You will need to interview the applicant as to what was said between him/her and his/her recruiter and get an official written statement from the applicant (if the applicant refuses to write an official statement, then you will need to get one from the person to whom the applicant revealed the information). After this, brief your Commander immediately about the allegation (give him/her the official written statement). Your Commander must notify the Commander of the respective recruiting command the same day the applicant made the allegation and document the notification (normally made telephonically). You will use the official statement and notification made by your Commander to prepare a memorandum for your Commander's signature to be sent the next day to the applicable recruiting command concerning the applicant's allegation.

When confronted with an alleged improper recruiting practice, be sure to follow the procedures outlined in *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23, chap5, para 5-16.*

Chapter 15 - Keys to Success

Do Physical Training (PT)

Beyond its importance as a tool in meeting basic professional standards, PT will provide you with a valuable outlet for stress, help you feel and look better, and allow you to live a balanced, healthy life. It can also improve both individual and organizational morale and help you to keep a "military mind-set" to retain bearing and attitude in a remote location far away (and very different) from any base, post, or shipboard environment. PT can be done on an individual basis, organizational basis, or a combination thereof, depending on your mission schedule and the preferences of your Commander and your staff. If your MEPS is not located near or on a military base/post, your MEPS should be authorized budgetary funds either for a health/fitness club membership or an in-house fitness space/equipment. Don't forget to include your civilian staff in PT activities -- although their participation must be on a voluntary basis, civilian participation in organized or individual PT will usually aid in promoting esprit de corps in your MEPS.

Be Flexible

The secret to success in most military environments is to remain flexible and adaptable to rapidly changing situations. As the OPSO, you will experience days where things may seem too dull or too routine in the production line environment. On other days, you will be confronted with several exceptions to processing policies that you must deal with in a matter of minutes, while also administering oath ceremonies, taking phone calls, and managing personnel and resource problems. The MEPS environment is somewhat unique in that you work in a civilian community in direct contact with the public on a daily basis, frequently dealing with problems you have never faced before. In these situations, try to remain open-minded and consider each situation separately and as carefully as possible before responding. Also, make the most of the institutional knowledge and experience of other staff members, particularly your civilian employees who, for several years, may have been involved with some of the same unusual problems you are dealing with now. Finally, as a general rule, always attempt to protect the best interests of the United States (first) and the applicant (second) in making important decisions.

Be Prepared to Deal With the "Idiosyncrasies" of Your MEPS

Every MEPS is different based upon the size, available resources (particularly staffing), attitudes and personalities of key staff and key customers, geographic location, and other factors. Because of these differences, no two MEPS should (or even could) operate in the exact same manner. Therefore, you may wish to develop an operations SOP derived from the regulations, but tailored to your MEPS. Your MEPS should already have such an SOP -- if so, review it carefully after your arrival and update it against current regulatory and Command guidance -- if not, start drafting one as soon as possible. Once you have a well tested, well-established SOP, per "rule 2" (be flexible), be prepared to make frequent changes to it as regulatory, facilities, equipment, personnel, and other changes occur and actively seek improvements to your SOP as you gain experience and see the opportunity to improve it.

Talk to People

One of the most important aspects of your job is communication. Effective communication can resolve many problems, and ineffective communication is involved in almost every problem that arises. Walk around the MEPS at least twice a day and directly observe what is occurring in every section. Talk to the operations staff, including not only your section supervisors, but also your processing clerks, testers, health technicians, and applicants, to get a genuine perspective (or even just a different perspective) of

what's going on. Doing this regularly will not only help you in improving or maintaining processing, but also assist you in resolving personal problems, promoting a positive image of customer Service, and staying focused on the fact that our "business" is people.

Review the Appropriate Regulations Within 15-30 Days of Your Arrival

The MEPS environment is unique and one of its aspects is that your operations are governed by several sets of regulations, directives, and policy memos. These include regulations and other guidance published by USMEPCOM (which takes precedence over most other regulations and guidance in operational matters), the Army (from which USMEPCOM was originally created), other Service branches, and other sources (i.e., Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, etc.). A brief (certainly not all inclusive) list of key regulations and other written guidance with subjects covered is given below. Also, take the time to review the Regulations again in 6 months because you'll gain a better understanding of them after you've had the chance to learn and understand the MEPS' mission.

  - *AR 40-501 (Standards of Medical Fitness)*
  - *AR 601-222 (Armed Services Military Personnel Accession Testing Program)*
  - *AR 601-270 (MEPS - how a MEPS runs with guidance on personnel, processing, facilities, etc.)*
  - *CE 611-1 (OPM Handbook for Administering the ASVAB)*
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 601-23 (the central reference on administrative enlistment processing)*
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 680-1 (Military Entrance Processing Reporting System (MEPRS)*
(USMEPCOM Reg 680-1 will be replaced by USMEPCOM Reg 680-3: approximate release date: June 03)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 40-1* (general medical processing and examinations)
  - *USMEPCOM 40-8* (Human Immunodeficiency Virus Testing and Drug/Alcohol Testing)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 601-4* (student or high school testing)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 611-1* (general guidance on testing)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 25-32* (everything you must know on correspondence)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 55-2* (recruit transportation and travel)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 750-1* (equipment maintenance)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 715-3* (contracting - for meals and lodging etc.)
  - *USMEPCOM Reg 215-1* (AVMF account - how to use non-appropriated funds)
  - *USMEPCOM Circulars "20 series"* (the basis for your CIPs or self inspections)
  - *MEPS, Sector, and USMEPCOM policy memorandums (including the Red Carpet Program)*

Community Involvement

Get involved with the community and encourage your staff to get involved as well. This will help establish and maintain important relationships that may be beneficial to you, your MEPS, or the military in general.

Do Your Homework

Know what the answers are before you make a decision. Get information from all those involved, read the regulations, and talk with your commander, your staff, and if necessary, other OPSOs. Be a detective -- the information is there. Just go get it.

Be Aware of Consequences

Making a decision to allow an exception to policy in one section may have a major impact on another section. Always keep the "big picture" in mind -- know how each section operates. Doing your daily walk-through, reading the Regs, and asking questions can't be stressed enough.   Talk with applicants -- find out how your decision is going to affect them. Ask them questions such as where they live in relation to the MEPS, how long of a day they have had, have they eaten, etc. In other words, find out as much information as you can in order to make a decision that is going to be in keeping with the Red Carpet Program.

Don't Make Changes Within the First 60 to 90 Days, Unless Necessary

Give yourself time to "learn the ropes" and use your first 60 to 90 days as an indoctrination period. You have to know and understand what's going on before you can grasp how changes will affect it. Ask people for input when you want to make changes, talk to the subject matter experts -- you may find the policy/procedure you want to implement may be the one that was in place before and wasn't effective. Also, you may realize your idea for change is a **good one** and, with the input of others, can become a **great one.**   Start small; a tweak here and a tweak there as a means to improving a process, and then assess its benefit/negative impact.

No "Snap" Decisions

Making hasty decisions will not give you the opportunity to gather information and details necessary to make a smart decision. Depending on how much time you have, develop and consider all your options before making your decision. Get feedback from your subordinates and other leaders on the decision you want to make -- they can assist in providing a different view of your idea and help you refine your decision. If time permits, consult with other MEPS OPSOs for additional insight--knowledge is power.

Be Consistent

To prevent a lot of confusion internally, and being labeled as an unorganized MEPS by external sources, make sure your MEPS is consistent in ensuring the MEPS' mission is accomplished. To be consistent, enforce the standards in which you operate and ensure these standards are understood by everyone.

Ask Questions

As a standard rule of thumb, if you do not know the answer - ASK SOMEONE WHO DOES! As the OPSO, you should never hesitate to ask questions, consider the facts involved, and develop a plan to execute to accomplish the mission. Some questions can be answered internally within your MEPS; however, never forget that your sector Staff is a valuable resource and they can provide valuable advice to solve your dilemma. If necessary and applicable, always reference the regulation, page, and paragraph of which you've made your decision. If the answer cannot be referenced, get the response in writing, or generate a memorandum for record for your files.

Review SOPs

Knowing your station's SOPs is of great importance. As the OPSO, you must be intimately familiar with the operations within your MEPS and the standards your Commander expects the MEPS to maintain. Once you know how your MEPS operates, you can readily make any necessary adjustments to ensure your operations are well above the standards prescribed by your Commander.

Think "Gray"... Forget How You Did Things in Past Assignments

In other words, BE FLEXIBLE! Do not look at things as right/wrong, or yes/no -- be open; explore the "gray area in the middle" that may allow you to do the things you may not be aware of. Although you want to be receptive to as many ideas as possible, there are some decisions that cannot be made without approval from level(s) above your authority. Ensure your Commander is well informed of any idea or decision you wish to execute so that you receive appropriate guidance from him/her.

Learn the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA)

The TDA lets you know what personnel/equipment you currently have, what you are supposed to have, and what you cannot have. Any changes to station personnel positions will involve this document. Something to remember - you may be able to change a military position into a civilian position, but you may not be able to do the reverse. Consider things such as pay and probability of filling positions before making any changes.

Leadership Traits and Principles

Although leadership principles have been preached to you constantly throughout your career, the MEPS environment is different from the traditional Service branch assignments you've served in. You will be working with military personnel from all branches of the Armed Services as well as constant interaction with civilian personnel. Because of the complex environment you'll be working in, it may help to review the basic principles of leadership to assist you in your supervisory and decision-making processes. *Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100 (Military Leadership)* serves as an excellent source of information on this topic.

Stay Focused on the Daily Mission

Your daily goal should be on processing applicants efficiently and providing solid support to the Services. As a new set of eyes coming into the Command, you are in an excellent position to make a subjective, if not an objective, observation of how operations are performed in your MEPS. Make note of processes or procedures that seem redundant and ask why things are done a certain way. Applicant processing is essentially redundant on a daily basis with a few twists added every now and then. Don't become complacent and don't get caught up with the "little things". Remember, you have NCOICs and/or supervisors for each section ... let them do their jobs, and keep the "big picture" in mind.

Maintain Professional Military Standards

For most applicants processing at the MEPS, it is the first exposure they have had to a military organization – first impressions count. Make sure you and all other military personnel at the MEPS present the best of the military. Remember that the impression an applicant gets from their visit to the MEPS will have lasting effects throughout their military careers.

In addition, maintaining military standards and courtesies reminds all personnel that though they are in an office environment, they are still part of the United States Armed Forces.

Optimization of Operations

After you've been at your Command for a while and have had the chance to observe the daily processes and gain a good understanding of how they are interrelated, you may want to consider making some changes. Consider the following:

1. Is the process needed?

2. Is the process being conducted IAW regulations set by your local commander and higher authority?

3. Does the process meet the needs of those it serves?

4. Is there a more efficient and effective way to do this process to obtain the same or better results?

5. If any, what type of changes have been made in the past to the process?--do some research.

Keep Your Sense of Humor

Don't get bent out of shape over the "little things" that have very little impact on your mission. Be objective and remain calm, cool, and collected. There's probably a few people on the staff with very funny personalities (there's at least one in every crowd). Let them know it's O.K. to write little humorous, non-offensive sayings, or come up with fun activities for the staff to enjoy. If you're intense and high strung over incidental issues, then your staff will feel like they're walking on "pins and needles" when they're around you. Stay relaxed so they can remain relaxed, take a deep breath when you need it . You'll find that this type of attitude will do wonders for the morale of your people.

Glossary (List of Acronyms)

A:

ABT: *Assistant Budget Technichian*

ACES: *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Study*

AF: *Air Force*

AFOQT: *Air Force Officer Qualification Test*

ASVAB: *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery*

ATO: *Acting Transportation Officer*

AVMF: *Amusement and Vending Machine Fund*

B

BA: *Budget Analyst*

BDU: *Battle Dress Uniform*

BUPERSINST: *Bureau of Personnel Instruction*

C

CAT-ASVAB: *Computerized Adaptive Testing - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery*

CBA: *Centrally Billed Account*

CEP: *Career Exploration Program*

CIP: *Command Inspection Program*

CMO: *Chief Medical Officer*

COMP Time: *Compensatory Time*

COR: *Contracting Officer Representative*

CPO: *Civilian Personnel Office*

CTAV: *Compliance/Training and Assistance Visit*

CWT: *Carlson Wagonlit Travel*

D

DA: *Department of the Army*

DAT: *Drug Analysis Testing*

DEP: *Delayed Entry/Enlistment Program*

DoD: *Department of Defense*

E

EMAP: *Emergency Management Assistance Plan*

ENTNAC: *Entrance National Agency Check*

ESS: *Education Services Specialist*

ETP: *Enlistment Testing Program*

F

FBP: *Fee-Basis Physician*

G

GOV: *Government-owned vehicles*

GTR: *Government Transportation Request*

GTS: *Government Travel Service*

H

HCG: *Human Chorionic Gonadotropin*

HIV: *Human Immunodeficiency Virus*

HQ USMEPCOM: *Headquarters, United States Military Entrance Processing Command*

HRA: *Human Resource Assistant*

I

IAW: *In Accordance With*

IG: *Inspector General*

IMC: *Intermittent Message Change*

IMPAC: *International Merchant Purchasing Authorization Card*

ITS: Information Technology Specialists

IRC: *InterService Recruiting Committee*

ISSO: *Information Systems Security Officer*

J

JAG: *Joint Accession Group*

JRCC: *Joint Recruiting Command Committee*

JPS: Joint Personnel System

M

MEPS: *Military Entrance Processing Station*

MEQS: *Missions Essential Qualification Standards*

MET: *Mobile Examining Team*

MIRC: *Midlevel InterService Recruiting Committee*

MIRS: *MEPCOM Integrated Resource System*

MOS: *Military Occupational Specialty*

MTMC: *Military Traffic Management Command*

N

NAC: *National Agency Checks*

NAF: *Non-Appropriated Fund*

NAVPERS: *Naval Personnel*

NOOW: *National Operations Officer Workshop*

O

OGLC: *Operations Group Leader Course*

OJT: *On-The-Job-Training*

OPM: *Office of Personnel Management*

OPSO: *Operations Officer*

P

PAI: *Preaccession Interview*

PEI: *Preenlistment Interview*

PT: *Physical Training*

POC: *Point of Contact*

PSRO: *Passenger Standing Route Order*

Q

QRP: *Quality Review Program*

R

RL: *Recruiter Lead*

RSN/WAN: *Recruiting Station Network/Wide Area Network*

S

SAV: *Staff Assistance Visit*

SDP: *Same Day Processor*

SEA: *Senior Enlisted Advisor*

SOP: *Standard Operating Procedure*

SSN: *Social Security Number*

STP: *Student Testing Program*

T

TA: *Test Administrator*

TAPES: *Total Army Performance Evaluation System*

TCO: *Test Control Officer*

TDA: *Table of Distribution and Allowances*

TDY: *Temporary Duty*

TECH Check: *Technical check*

TS: *Transportation Specialist*

U

UCMJ: *Uniform Code of Military Justice*

USMEPCOM: *United States Military Entrance Processing Command*

Table of Appendices

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*** These items are recommended for inclusion in the Operations Officer Toolkit for your own benefit. This toolkit is not an item that the SAV/CTAV or IG team will inspect; therefore, you may add or delete from the suggested list of appendix items above to conform the Operations Officer Toolkit to your needs.*

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